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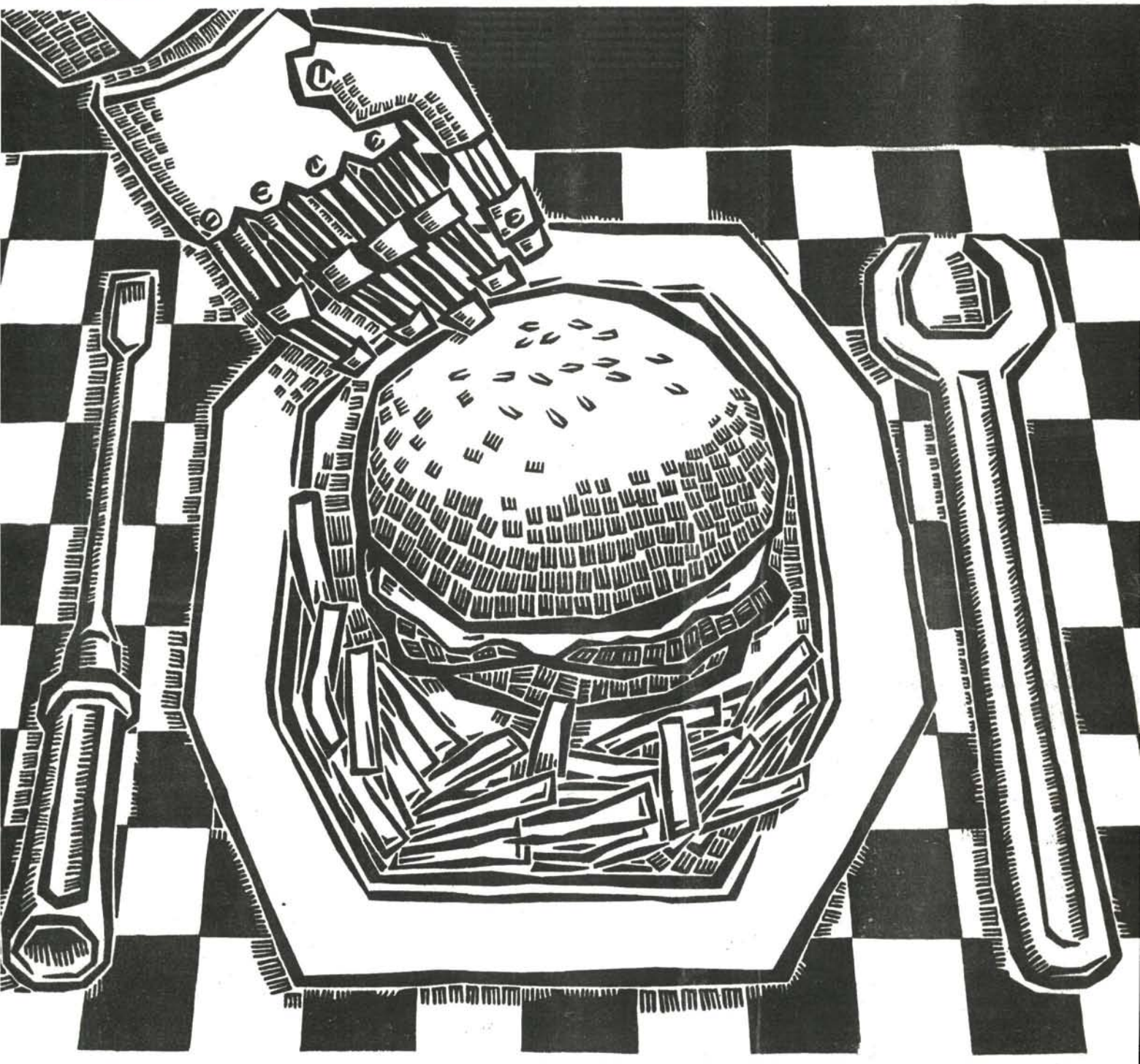
New Statesman



FINGER-LICKIN' AWFUL

Working for the fast-food industry

PLUS: After Molesworth • Sudan's crisis • Books

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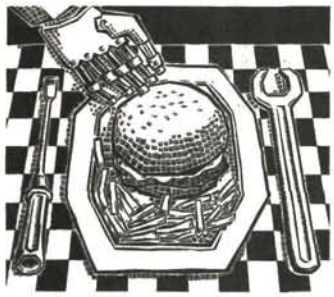
New Statesman



Cover drawing: Cliff Harper

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2821 12 April 1985

Geneva prospects are looking bleak

Let us begin anew — remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. Kennedy had a better class of speech writer than the present incumbent of the White House; and he delivered his inaugural speech in January 1961 convincingly without the aid of any autocue.

But substance is in the end more important than style in a politician. And there were grounds for hoping, tentatively at least, that in the run up to his re-election campaign President Reagan had changed his mind (or had it changed for him), as a result of which he would try to spend an important part of his second term seeking sincere negotiations with the Soviet Union to end the nuclear arms race. His handlers obviously sensed that his bellicose anti-Soviet rhetoric risked losing him votes; and the 'freeze movement' had clearly captured the political imagination of those Americans who instinctively rejected the insanity of piling endless billions of dollars into research and development of ever more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction when both the superpowers already had many times over the capacity required to end civilisation. Perhaps, it was suggested, a streak of vanity about his position in history would persuade Reagan to try to become the President who achieved a significant nuclear disarmament agreement with the ideological enemy.

Today there seems to be no justification for that optimism. The voices coming out of the Administration are now exactly the same in tone as they were in the period which led the Russians to walk out of the previous Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces negotiations in Geneva when Pershing II missiles were deployed in West Germany in 1983. It is always a bad sign when two sides start taking up public and incompatible positions in advance of formal international negotiations. It usually means that the exercise is only being conducted with an eye to effective propaganda and not as a preparation for real negotiations.

The window of opportunity that seemed to offer itself with the arrival of General Secretary Gorbachev has been allowed to shut. It is entirely possible that the Moscow military-industrial complex never had the slightest intention of allowing Gorbachev to explore substantial reductions in the level of the nuclear arms race — though on the basis of first principles regarding Soviet politics and the economy this is unlikely.

Mrs Thatcher clearly thought, admittedly on the basis of a fairly brief encounter before he was elevated, that Comrade Gorbachev was 'someone one could do business with'. But his offer to suspend European deployment of SS-20s until November was, it seems, summarily rejected by the Reagan machine within a few hours of the President waking to be told about it while on holiday at his ranch in California. If the Reagan Administration actually thought that civility is not a sign of weakness and that sincerity is always subject to proof, the right tactical response to the Gorbachev initiative would have been to say that it was an interesting if limited proposal, which would in any case be carefully studied. A previous Administration might also have added that the United States would consider it in consultation with its allies.

As it was the formal US reaction was swift and from the mouth

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of the White House spokesman Larry Speakes: the Soviet suggestion was written off as merely the revival of previous Soviet offers designed to 'freeze in place a considerable Soviet advantage'. For her bit part in the story of this squandered potential opportunity, instead of using the legitimate excuse that she was out of the country on her pseudo-regal swing round the Far East to justify keeping silent until some constructive European contribution to the debate could be co-ordinated, Mrs Thatcher performed her humiliating little role of enthusiastically echoing the President's negativism, in the probably mistaken belief that staying sycophantically in line offers the chance of *some* influence in Washington.

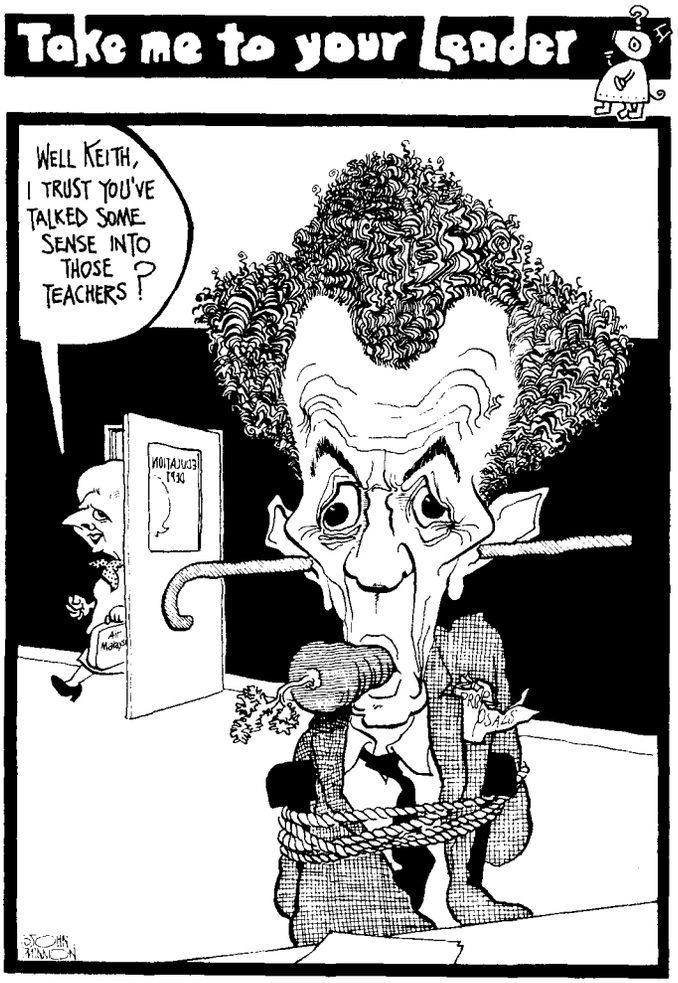
Wrong numbers game

There is a core to the Reagan/Thatcher response to Soviet proposals, like the latest Gorbachev offer, which makes it totally and distressingly clear that nothing constructive can come from negotiations at Geneva in the present political context. The first is the assumption that the security of the United States and its allies depends on the Americans having as many or more nuclear weapons systems or warheads in *every* possible nuclear category as the Soviet Union has in *any* single one. The Soviet Union happens to have put relatively much greater resources into land-based missiles, both intercontinental and intermediate range. So long as the White House and its Geneva negotiators are going to leave completely out of account the fact that airborne and submarine-launched nuclear missiles are experienced by Moscow as part of the NATO nuclear threat, there can be no US-Soviet meeting of minds.

Additionally, American intermediate range missiles based in Europe, especially Pershing II with its 6 minute flying time from West Germany to the Soviet command and communications installations in the European Soviet Union, represent a threat on the Russian doorstep that even improved SS-20s manifestly do not to the United States. If, therefore, the Reagan Administration immediately rejects the Gorbachev initiative because it would stabilise a claimed 10-1 Soviet numerical superiority in land-based intermediate weapons, then that reveals a basic position from which agreement with the Soviet Union will never be achieved.

If the Kremlin has come to a similar conclusion, or is confirmed in it in the course of this year, then the only tactics worth pursuing from the Russian point of view are propaganda initiatives designed to recreate the political embarrassment within NATO that came with the decision to press ahead regardless with the deployment of cruise and Pershing.

In this respect the latest Gorbachev proposal is indeed part of a pattern of Soviet policy in the nuclear disarmament field, at least since a politically weakening President Carter failed to persuade the US Congress to ratify the SALT II treaty, signed in 1979 after five years of negotiation. In 1979, before NATO formally took the fateful decision to deploy cruise and Pershing, Brezhnev offered unilaterally to reduce the number of Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe provided there was no further NATO deployment. In 1981 Marshall Ustinov called for a moratorium on both sides on the deployment of such missiles. That summer Brezhnev told Messrs Foot and Healey in Moscow that the Soviet's would withdraw some SS-20s, if NATO halted cruise and Pershing. The same theme of willingness to cut Soviet missile strengths in Europe has been a running thread in all Soviet policy statements ever since. The Americans have not been prepared to test the sincerity of the Soviet position and there is no sign that they are going to change the way they play the numbers game now either.



CND's next phase

There is a further equally key feature of the present American negotiating stance on nuclear weapons that makes it hard to see how agreement can come. It is the assumption that for nuclear deterrence to work it is not just enough that the United States should have the capacity to take out all Soviet centres of population and industry many times over, but that constant research and development is required to make the total destruction of the world achievable with even greater sophistication and accuracy. Any suggestion, therefore, that there is any branch of related science in which the United States does not have a clear and safe lead over the Soviet Union gets translated by this warped process of thought into an undermining of the security of the United States itself. Such a philosophy gave birth to Star Wars. So long as it persists, creating no doubt equivalent paranoia on the Soviet side, it is hard to see negotiations succeeding.

In such a climate the role of the anti-nuclear movements both in Europe and the United States are vital. As the Easter demonstration at Molesworth proved, in this country, CND remains a mass political movement with real potential capacity to change the political context of the nuclear debate. Many activists are understandably depressed by the fact that after so many years of winning the moral argument there is still no prospect of real advance while President Reagan is in the White House and conservative European governments do what they are told. Even a symbolic victory, it sometimes feels, would be helpful. It would also be helpful if all the initiatives to be welcomed did not come from the Soviet Side. Why cannot the British government even allow Polaris into the debate?

In the next phase it will be critical to maintain CND as a moral campaign, as it has decidedly been while Bruce Kent has been there. But in addition, an element of directly political campaigning needs now to be added to turn a morally correct position into a political achievement before the end of the decade.

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DoE THINKS GREEN BUT TRIES TO KEEP MUM

THE GOVERNMENT is secretly carrying out a major and wide-ranging review of its whole policy towards the environment. ROB EDWARDS reports

CONSCIOUS of the growing concern about 'green issues' in the Conservative Party and elsewhere, and aware of the failure of successive governments to convince the public that they really care about the environment, the Department of the Environment, (DoE) last November set up a special internal 'Think Tank' to come up with a series of new policy options for Ministers to consider before the next general election.

This is revealed by internal DoE documents passed to the *New Statesman*. A minute prepared for ministerial consideration on 22 November 1984 by Mrs L. A. Thomas from the department's central policy planning unit sets out the objectives, scope and handling of what one environmentalist calls 'potentially the most important development in environment policy we have seen for many years'.

The extraordinary aspect of the review is the government's determination to keep it quiet. The leaked minute points out that discussions with groups such as Friends of the Earth, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds will be necessary. But, with defiant logic, it adds:

> There is, of course, a risk in this. We propose to take a low profile, and handle discussions with discretion, presenting our contacts as a normal part of government department's routine and continuing need to keep itself informed of thinking outside government. However, the Minister will be aware that there is some possibility that the scope and nature of our discussions may alert environmental interest groups that something out of the usual is probably going on, and perhaps lead at some stage to speculation in the press; though we hope that, with care, this may be avoidable.

Those who know . . .

In fact several of the key environmental groups are well aware that the review is taking place. The editorial in Friends of the Earth's latest supporters' newsletter refers to it in passing and DoE's director Jonathon Porritt expresses bafflement as to why the department should attempt to disguise the fact. A spokesman for the DoE confirmed the existence of the review to the *New Statesman* this week but said that it's still at an early stage, with a paper expected to go to ministers 'sometime in the early summer'.

The leaked minute says that the aim of the review is 'to develop for the medium term a more positive and integrated presentation of policy on safeguarding the environment' and to come up with 'options for action to be agreed by Ministers collectively within two years'. The policy issues to be covered include:

- rural development and conservation
- control of fertilisers and pesticides
- water, air and noise pollution
- nuclear and other waste disposal
- land reclamation
- planning
- and cycling.

But the review was deliberately designed to avoid more thorny and sensitive areas like the effects of defence policy on the environment, energy policy, road construction, and (less understandably) policy on ancient monuments. The memorandum states: 'We shall clearly need to take account of current policy thinking, but without being limited thereby from considering radical or provocative (but not realistic) possibilities if there is a case to be made for them.'

Colour coding

As ever great care was taken over the presentation of the review, even though it was meant to be kept a secret. The memorandum agonises about what it should be called:

> The title 'Green Issues' seems on reflection to take us too far into the camp of the environmental lobby. Whilst we shall be tapping their ideas, it might be wiser to adopt our own terminology. We propose 'Safeguarding the Environment' as an alternative that strikes the right note.

Another leaked paper — by one of the Department's deputy secretaries, scientist Dr Martin Holdgate — gives a disarmingly frank and personal account of the context of the review. Ministers, he thinks, 'do not yet understand what has been happening' to the environmental concept:

> We have had a DoE for 10 years: it has not gained general acceptance as an environmental department in the context of the political movement . . . The government (by which I mean the past 4 administrations) has not convinced the public that it is succeeding in caring for the countryside or in curbing pollution . . . We are now being pressed to adopt policies eg on acid rain, marine pollution, water quality, ozone depletion, which are costly and challenged economically — yet appear to have a concensus of support in other developed and EC [European Community] countries. It is difficult to contend that we can be so consistently out of step and yet right. ●

Brawling Tory youth backs the 'contras'

THE POSTER right is one of two published by the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) backing the 'contras' attacks on Nicaragua — and it's an example of those ultra right policies which Conservative Central Office fears may come to light if the rumpus over the withdrawal of their £30,000 annual grant rumbles on.

The FCS pro-contra stand is particularly notable given a report published in February by the Parliamentary Human Rights Group on the Nicaraguan elections. Tory MP David Ashby was amongst the all-party delegation which declared the elections, won by the Sandinistas, as 'scrupulously fair'.

It will be interesting to see whether Ashby insists yet more loudly on these views if the row over the FCS focuses on their politics and not simply on the aggressive behaviour of the FCS, who call themselves 'the future seedcorn of the Conservative leadership' (Guardian *10 April*).

Jane Dibblin

Black boycott threatens Notts May elections

A ROW between Nottinghamshire's ethnic minority organisations and the county's *ruling Labour group may lead to* a black boycott of May's county council elections.

The dispute centres around the disproportionate number of suspensions of black children in Nottingham schools. Although they make up only 7 per cent of the school population, the council admits that they are three times as likely to be suspended as white children. But Nottingham African Caribbean Convention (NACC) claims that the ratio is six to one, and says that the council has cooked the books by not including under the heading of 'black', children of Asian origin or mixed parentage.

The council agreed to carry out ethnic monitoring of suspensions after numerous complaints from black parents that their children were being picked on. It was claimed that as well as being more likely to be suspended, black children were being punished for trivial misdemeanours and in some cases were being racially abused by teachers.

Findings withheld

But having carried out the monitoring the council refused to release the figures, going back, says NACC, on a previous undertaking. Mr A J Fox, the education director, told NACC: 'No useful purpose will be served by making statistics on suspensions available to one group in the community'. The figures were eventually released after NACC received a leaked version.

At the centre of the row is the chair of the education committee, Fred Riddell, who has angered sections of the black community by saying in a radio interview that there's a correlation between suspended children and one-parent families.

Deeply dissatisfied with the council's attitude, NACC is urging the black community to spoil their ballot papers in the elections. Labour has an overall majority of 21, but a black boycott — together with the legacy of the miners' strike — could put it in doubt. The swing to Labour in last year's Euro elections was one of the lowest in the country.

According to councillor Riddell, the Labour group is a victim of its own generosity towards the ethnic minorities: 'We have put more money into the ethnic minorities than any other authority apart from ILEA, and we have raised the level of black awareness. It is a very foolish thing that NACC are suggesting.'

Jolyon Jenkins

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UK PUT UP £4m TO GET SECOND CRUISE BASE

A SECRET £4 million subsidy has been provided to the US Air Force by the British government in order to persuade the USAF to build *two* cruise missile bases — Molesworth as well as Greenham Common — instead of one. But to avoid embarrassment, the money has been hidden from public and parliamentary view by a special MoD 'laundering' operation. DUNCAN CAMPBELL reports

LAST YEAR the Ministry of Defence did admit unofficially that Britain had agreed to pay some US costs but claimed (to the *Observer* in August) that the amount of taxpayers' money involved was 'pennies'.

and Defence Secretary Francis Pym believed that by creating as many bases as possible, the government would *reduce* protest activity, by dispersing it. Unsurprisingly, this view is no longer in favour in Whitehall. The US position was then that a single base at Greenham Common would be ideal.

Ministry of Defence information shows that the men most closely involved in the costly mistake were Mr Michael Quinlan and Mr Ewen Broadbent. Both men have since become Permanent Secretaries, and have been knighted. Sir Ewen Broadbent has recently retired, but Sir Michael Quinlan, a Thatcher protege, now runs the Department of Employment.

The secret subsidy to the Americans has been concealed from the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons. It breaches

David Sillitoe

Lady Olga Maitland with servants, at Molesworth this Easter

Asked this week to acknowledge that the penny pile was somewhat more substantial, MoD officials asserted that all aspects of the cruise missile deployment are 'regarded as classified by both governments', and would only admit to a quite separate payment to NATO funds.

The British government agreed to accept the deployment of 160 cruise missiles in December 1979. Discussions to select suitable sites took place between then and June 1980. At that time, senior officials

the longstanding arrangement whereby, although the US gets all its land rent-free from the MoD, it pays for all facilities, services and construction costs.

In fact, the Molesworth subsidy has been provided to the USAF by not charging for work done constructing and renovating married quarters and other facilities.

Recently, when it became obvious that the construction of two cruise missile bases would create rather more difficulty with protestors, the MoD tried to back out of the agreement. But the Americans refused to budge, arguing that Greenham Common was now no longer sufficiently large or secure to accommodate all 160 missiles.

But the British government's U-turn and subsequent argument on the issue did alarm US Congressional committees who after hearing classified evidence 'froze' construction funds. They wanted assurances that the British 'dual-basing' concept was still valid before construction started. ●

(See also Polly Woolley on Molesworth p14)

Tenterhooks

UNDER TV arc lights and a considerable Fleet St turnout the London Lesbian & Gay Centre was duly opened this week (NS 5 April) by GLC women's committee chair Valerie Wise, but still — as we go to press — without DoE consents to the £130,000 that was to have paid staff. Centre fundraisers reckon that proposed public cash equals 'only 13p a year per lesbian and gay ratepayer'.

MISCELLANY

Dora Russell break-in

Police are taking 'very seriously indeed', as well they might, a break-in at Dora Russell's Cornish home on 1 April which included the rifling of her desk and card-index, the theft of £10 from her handbag — and a personal attack on her as she lay in bed, which has left her with bruising and a strained ankle. Odd circumstance, if the above isn't thought odd enough against the background of Hilda Murrell (*NS* 29 March etc) and the Woolf break-in (*NS* 22 February), is a fact recounted by Dora Russell's housekeeper. After the police had been and gone a car without lights drew up at 5.10 am and stood outside the house for a while, engine running, before driving off. Anyone can think of a dozen innocent reasons, but. . . The veteran socialist takes the broad view: 'If they're busy searching my house at least it's less harassment for others'.

Smashing coincidence

If it weren't so serious it would be bloody funny. After making unnumbered protests about police inactivity over complaints of racial harassment, Bradford's Bowling

Action Group (the reference is to a district, not the sport) got the top cops to come and talk on Tuesday night 2 April at the Asian community centre. Bricks promptly smashed through the windows. Chief super Cooper from Wakefield HQ and Insp Wooler of Bradford community planning office charged out — to return half an hour later, breathless and sweaty, empty-handed. Yes, said the super, this did rather confirm that damage is being done to Asian property.

First cuckoos of spring

Irish republicanism is tightening its grip on the ultra-respectable Sussex town of Haywards Heath. And militant British Nationalism isn't far behind. We owe this timely warning to Tory-controlled Mid Sussex District council who have 'slapped a ban' (as the local paper has it) on a proposed Labour Party Arts Festival and rally in one of the town's parks. For good measure they've outlawed political rallies in parks throughout mid-Sussex. For, as councillor Ken Holder asks: 'What are you going to do if people like the National Front and Sinn Fein come in?' We thought of phoning Sinn Fein to see if they had any rallies planned for Haywards Heath. . . somehow it didn't seem worth it.

A veil of silence

Our political editor's area has been on the receiving end of a 'Liberal Focus' *leafletting exercise. All sorts of local Lib worthies are quoted saying how wonderful they are. One name, however, is missing: Richard Kennard, the Liberals' local GLC candidate in 1981, and recent vice-chair of the Hornsey Liberals. Admittedly, it's a bit difficult to parade Kennard in front of the voters these days. He's just started a three-month jail sentence for blackmail.*

Ample-means testing

Panic spreads in UK boardrooms as the *NS* Politics of Envy Unit probes ever deeper. Phone call to Lonrho board member Paul Spicer fails to elicit copy of accounts. Intrepid reporter gets one by going to Lonrho Towers (aka Cheapside House) and asking the doorperson for it. So. Well. Chief exec 'Tiny' Rowland's salary is up 22 per cent at £322,861, but that's neither here nor there: his estimated dividend income is £7 million. His share options are worth a potential £271,500. Elsewhere in the benefits stratosphere, continuing our ample-means testing, the Unit contact BP. They *really* panic. BP send us a 4 kilogram package containing 18 copies of their accounts — perhaps in the hope we'll be too worn out lugging it upstairs to work out the share option scheme. But we have the muscle. BP chair Sir Peter Walters' share options are potentially worth £40,812 (modest, at the stratosphere), but his salary's up 32 per cent to £241,547. If BP contributions to directors' pensions are divided equally between the seven managing directors, they equal £181,219 each. That puts the £2.30 postage on the 18 copies of the accounts into perspective.

Courtesy of 18 BP accounts

Sir Peter, 32% inflated

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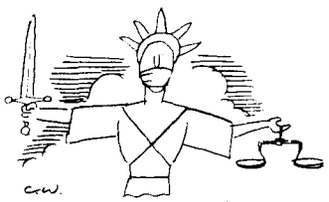

COURTING DISASTER

AS PART of our ongoing puncturing of any excessive confidence in British appeal procedures — viz our Innocent Women in Prison series (*NS* 22 February, and 1, 15, and 29 March) — we tell of two new controversial courtroom episodes

1 COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE felt they were on a loser even before the hearing began — for the Appeal Court judges refused to allow the prisoners, whose appeal was about to be heard, to be brought to the court to hear their destinies being argued out and decided by their Lordships Ackner, Kilner-Brown and Ormerod.

NEW STATESMAN readers may recall the case of the 'Police's Own Video Nasty' (*NS* 15 February, by Ivor Gaber). It involved five men imprisoned for between 15 and 17 years for an armed bank robbery back in 1977 which they claimed then, and maintain still, they didn't commit.

Readers may also recall that despite fresh evidence for the men revealed on BBC TV's *Watchdog* some 12 months ago, the case as of this February still hadn't come to appeal — mainly because there was no complete transcript available of the trial because (goes the official explanation) the shorthand writer fell off her horse and destroyed her notes(!)

But following publication of the *NS* article, and with a speed that has amazed seasoned legal observers, the Appeal Court allowed the case to proceed *despite* the absence of the transcripts. It was heard over six days, just before Easter. The defence based their application on two new items of forensic evidence which they argued threw fresh doubts on the rightness of the original convictions.

First, new research by glass expert Professor Harold Rawson of Sheffield University had revealed that glass fragments from the bank, allegedly found on the soles and heels of the accused men's footwear, should have shown distinct signs of wear and tear and couldn't have been described as 'looking freshly broken' — the term used by Dr Robert Watt, the prosecution expert at the original trial.

At the Appeal the prosecution accepted Rawson's findings but argued that it might well have been that by a series of coincidences the only fragments examined by Dr Watt might either have come from those parts of the lowers of the shoes not in direct contact with the ground, or were so deeply embedded in the soles and heels as to have been protected from any abrasion.

Weekend flurry

At this point in the hearing, 4.30 on Friday afternoon, defence counsel Michael Mansfield asked if the remaining, unexamined, fragments of glass could be looked at over the weekend at the police forensic laboratory.

The request was granted and the subsequent results delighted the defence — of all the fragments of glass removed and examined from the bottom of the shoes, both over the weekend and back in 1977, only one showed the distinctive signs of wear and tear that Professor Rawson had described; and that one hadn't, it was agreed, come from the bank. Case proved? Maybe, but the judges were clearly unimpressed.

They were similarly unmoved by the other new evidence. This related to a faulty video tape recording, made by the police outside the house of one of the defendants at the time of the robbery. At the trial the defence had claimed that a fault in the recording was in fact the tell-tale sign of a deliberate attempt by police to erase the tape because, they argued, it would have shown two of the defendants at home at the time when they were supposed to be robbing the bank.

Guy Maggioni, whose West London house was under police video observation the day of the Nat West robbery in June 1977 — what happened to the video film?

Mysterious faults

At the trial the prosecution relied on the evidence of police cameraman PC, now DC, Robert Robson and a Mr Brian Bellingham, called as an 'expert witness', who was in fact a police stills photographer. PC Robson claimed total ignorance of how the tape had developed the faults. Bellingham sought to explain everything in terms of an equipment malfunction.

However, the *Watchdog* programme revealed the existence of a *secret* report, written by Scotland Yard's own video expert Michael Eley back in 1980. He examined the tape and concluded that malfunctioning equipment couldn't explain the tape faults. He went on to describe the tape as containing 'serious irregularities' which gave 'cause for concern'.

At the Court of Appeal the prosecution expert — not Eley but a Mr C. J. Aldridge from the Home Office — agreed that the explanation of a technical mishap put forward by Bellingham at the trial wasn't tenable. He also accepted that PC Robson had failed to recall everything that happened that day when he told the jury at the trial that apart from reviewing previously recorded material, he hadn't touched the recording equipment after 9.40 on the day of the robbery.

However, Aldridge refused to accept that PC Robson had consciously interfered with the tape for the purposes of erasure. He argued instead that the mysteries of the tape could probably be accounted for as a result of an incompetent operator with a less than perfect memory.

The Appeal judges accepted the prosecution version. But in so doing they were forced to ignore one vital fact. The prosecution had argued that all PC Robson had been doing was reviewing the material he'd recorded before 9.40 in a technically unorthodox manner. But because every frame on the video had the time it was recorded clearly marked it was possible to know when all this reviewing had supposedly happened — between 1-4.30 on the afternoon of the robbery.

But, and it's a big but, at the original trial PC Robson had said that he'd *finished* all his reviewing before he heard over the police radio about the robbery — and the time of the robbery? 11 a.m. precisely!

Despite the contradictions of the video evidence and the coincidences of the glass the three appeal court judges dismissed the application, and the prisoners remain where they have been throughout — firmly in goal.

Ivor Gaber and Suzanne Franks

2 A JUDGMENT in the Court of Appeal last week highlighted yet again the inadequacy of the existing legal procedures for coping with miscarriages of justice — in fact, in dismissing appeals by Michael and Patrick McDonagh against convictions for murder in 1973, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, commented that the case against them had now 'hardened'.

MICHAEL MCDONAGH was imprisoned for life, along with his son Patrick, for the murder of his brother Francis in a house in Moss Side, Manchester, in February 1973. The case against them was undoubtedly formidable. They had quarrelled with Francis the previous day and had gone to his house after a hard night's drinking to have it out with him.

Subsequently, Francis was stabbed through the heart. How he had received the fatal wound was a matter of considerable dispute. There were, though, several reasons for believing that it hadn't been administered — as the prosecution alleged — by Michael McDonagh.

Surprise statements

Peter Hill and Martin Young, of the BBC's *Rough Justice*, re-interviewed key prosecution witnesses, for a programme screened April 1982. They learned that several had conspired together at the trial — under some duress — to conceal the fact that a West Indian named Isaac Panton had been present that night. Further, two witnesses, Sheila Ecclestone and Clara Esty (now Ricketts), both independently asserted that it was Panton who had actually knifed Francis.

Both came to London last week prepared to give fresh evidence at the appeal, but Ecclestone, accompanied by her legal representative, in the event declined to give evidence. Although both her solicitors and the Court itself had written to the Director of Public Prosecutions, he had refused immunity to witnesses.

Naturally, the appellants' case was undermined by the non-appearance of one witness and an intolerable burden was thrown on the other. Clara Ricketts was discredited when the Crown produced a long list of convictions against her for soliciting. The appeal was resoundingly lost.

Ecclestone's silence was actually eloquent testimony to the fact that the original convictions were, to use the legal jargon, 'unsafe and unsatisfactory'. The incident doesn't simply illustrate the built-in flaws of the process of judicial review. It makes a mockery of the whole system.

Bob Woffinden

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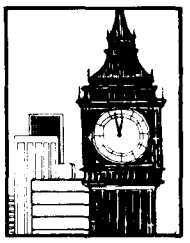

PETER KELLNER

Dear Neil, where's the beef?

An open letter to Neil Kinnock

Dear Neil,

You must be very pleased with the launch of the Labour Party's Jobs and Industry campaign; and with good reason. The campaign material is among the best I have ever seen the party produce. The policies it projects are clear and plausible. No longer will we have to defend ourselves against the charge that we have hopelessly unrealistic employment targets, or that economic recovery will be strangled by layer upon layer of bureaucratic planning.

All in all, the campaign stands a good chance of achieving the objective set out last autumn in the internal Walworth Road paper on the subject. It acknowledged that 'Labour has lost the economic argument. People do not believe our policies will work'. What the party needs to do now, therefore, is : 'capture the future, portraying the Tories as the dogmatic apologists of a bygone age.' According to that document, 'we can then win support for the values of democratic socialism that underlie our vision of Britain's future'.

I have no trouble with the bit about 'Britain's future': last week's 16-page pamphlet, *Jobs and Industry*, is full of material about research and development, innovation and high technology. It makes the telling point that 'the German government now spends twice as much on electronics — and the French government three times as much — as we do in Britain. But under Labour, microelectronics received *more* support than in either France or Germany'.

All good stuff. My problem is not with that, but with what last autumn's office paper called 'the values of democratic socialism'. I looked for some elaboration of that term in last week's pamphlet. I looked in vain. There is mention of 'documentary', 'partnership', 'co-operation' and, above all, 'working together'. But 'socialism'? Not a mensh.

Was there, I wondered, some secret plan to soften up the voters with benign words in order to win the next election, only to unleash the full rigours of state control afterwards. As far as I can tell from last autumn's document, that is far from the intention. It talks about 'developing a new language of socialist enterprise', but does not describe the substance which that language is supposed to portray. The nearest it comes is in the introduction, which states that

> Recovery will only succeed if people can take greater control over their own lives, so that rebuilding our industries goes side by side with greater opportunities for women and young people, support for industrial democracy and co-ops, and national and local government intervention.

I agree with all that, of course. But so would most Liberals and Social Democrats. There may be marginal differences between Labour and the Alliance parties — for example over the *degree* of 'national and local government intervention' — but scarcely one of principle. And in as far as Labour has policies that are different in kind from the Alliance (for example over whether to renationalise British Telecom), the party is keeping coy in its public utterances. The word 'nationalise' does not appear in *Jobs and Industry* either.

(To save you sending me a copy of *Labour's Charter for Co-ops*, also published last week, I already have one. Yes, I know its introductory chapter is called 'Socialism at its best'. But even if we developed the co-operative movement to the extent that it has grown in the rest of Europe, it would still mean less than one worker in a hundred employed in co-operatives).

DOES IT MATTER? Is there not a case for avoiding words like 'socialism' and 'nationalisation' which, as we well know, are bound to alienate the kind of voters we need?

It depends. All good marketing exercises — and the techniques for selling a political party are fundamentally no different from the techniques for selling soap flakes or package holidays — take great care in the words they use.

Furthermore, there could be no better time than this spring to create a new, more modern image for Labour. Mrs Thatcher is losing popularity fast, the Alliance is having difficulty repeating the kind of breakthrough it achieved in 1981, and your critics on Labour's Left are in disarray following the end of the miners' strike and the disputes inside the GLC over rate-capping. You have as near a free run as you are ever likely to have inside the party to do what you want and an electorate outside keener than for some time to support a credible alternative to the Tories.

But — and it's a big but — marketing is not only about language. Substance matters too. All the right words can do is persuade people to take a closer, perhaps more sympathetic, look at what you are trying to sell. The form of the 'Jobs and Industry' campaign is fine; it is the substance that worries me.

Do you intend the next Labour government to be 'socialist'? If so, in what sense? If we take it that you do not intend to nationalise GEC, ICI or Marks and Spencer, how *will* they be incorporated into your vision of a socialist Britain? *Jobs and Industry* refers to 'a radically reorganised and strengthened National Economic Development Council', whose job will be to 'develop a long-term strategy for British industries'. Where will the staff to undertake this task come from? To whom will they be accountable? What powers will they have? What sanctions, if any, will they be able to impose on private companies that think they know better and choose to go their own way? In short, has anyone in the party really thought this through?

My guess is that these questions do not really interest you. They should. Do not be soft-talked by friends who tell you to avoid ideology. In the short run you might enjoy a quieter life than if you confront your opponents both on the Right and the Left on fundamentals; but in the longer run — to be precise, during the next general election campaign — you are bound to be caught out. If *Jobs and Industry* forms the basis of the economic policy section of Labour's next manifesto, you will be accused by the Right of having a secret socialist agenda — and accused by the Left of having abandoned socialism altogether. Better to say what you really think and face down those charges now, even at the risk of ruffling various Labour Party feathers.

That course would have the instrinsic electoral advantage of clarifying things that are at present ambiguous. There is another advantage. Suppose Labour does win power at the next election and you become Prime Minister, what then? Unless the party has a coherent idea of how to implement its policies, its radicalism will gradually crumble at the hands of the civil service.

There is a salutary reminder of the inadequacies of manifesto slogans in Ben Pimlott's excellent biography of Hugh Dalton*, Attlee's Chancellor in the 1945 Parliament. One of Labour's policies was to nationalise the Bank of England: the Bank was seen as the very heart of capitalism; it was thought that if the Bank remained in private hands it might sabotage the rest of Labour's programme; and Dalton wanted 'to turn the Bank into the dynamo of a socialist plan'.

So what happened? According to Pimlott:

> 'We're going to nationalise the Bank', the new Chancellor told his private secretary on the Monday after his appointment. 'We don't know how, but we're going to do it. Get the appropriate man to draw up the plans'.

The plans were duly drawn up, nationalisation went ahead — but the Bank remained, in practice, a bastion of capitalism rather than a dynamo for socialism.

Don't let the same fate befall your plans. In June 1983, in the John Mackintosh Memorial lecture, you said that 'democratic socialists must prepare the ground for the day when a Labour government is elected to Parliament on a socialist programme'. There is a lot of ground still to prepare.

Yours etc,
Peter Kellner

*Published by Cape; £25.

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FEEDING THE FAST FOOD CHAIN

The fat profits of fast food giants depend on the labour of young people. Yiannis Gabriel talks to them about surviving in one of the few industries with jobs for school leavers

FAST FOOD did not get its name for nothing: speed is the secret of its success. As the spearhead of the great 'refuelling revolution' in catering, the fast food outlet is an assembly line which churns out a uniform and reliable product on a regular and repetitive basis. The hamburger has become the acclaimed Model T of catering, the result of careful study and planning, appealing to a world market. Vast technical and human resources (to say nothing of the animals) are involved in its production — cooking would be a word hopelessly misplaced in this context.

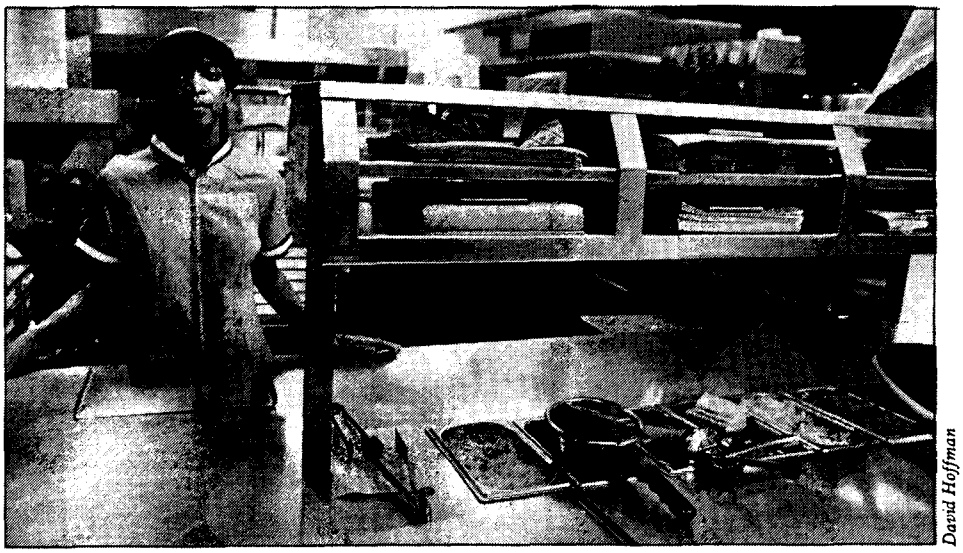
The growth of fast food has been phenomenal. In the United States, the number of jobs 'created' in fast food in the 1970s exceeded the total number of jobs in the steel and automobile industries combined. McDonald's, the fast food world leaders, employ more people than the entire steel industry in the US; according to some estimates over half their customers in the year 2000 will be former employees of the company.

In this country over 1000 hamburger, over 1350 pizza and over 650 chicken outlets have opened in the past 15 or 20 years. McDonald's now have 165 outlets (up from 81 in 1982) and an annual turnover 'in excess of £100 million'. They employ 12,400 people (up from 6,300 in 1982) of whom 75 per cent are under 21 years of age and the majority work part-time. Kentucky Fried Chicken, a subsidiary of the 26th largest company in the United States, R. J. Reynolds, has over 360 stores of which 300 are franchise operations and predicts it will open 'at least 150 new stores' in the next five years; its turnover in 1983 exceeded £75 million.

Wimpy, Britain's traditional fast food leaders with over 370 table-service franchises, have joined the counter-service bandwagon and now control 89 such outlets, double the number of two years ago. They are part of United Biscuits and their turn-over is estimated at £80 million per year; their profits in 1983 were £3.8 million and they are expected to have doubled in 1984.

THE FORMIDABLE international success of fast food has been built on the systematic exploitation of teenage labour. A stint at the fast food store is becoming part of the work experience of an increasing number of young people. 'Older people couldn't stand the pace' a fast food manager told me, 'this type of job with its clean dynamic image appeals to younger people'. With three quarters of its labour force under the age of 21 and with labour turnover of approximately 70 per cent within a year it is not surprising that fast food is one of the few sectors which can still offer large numbers of jobs to school-leavers.

What kinds of jobs and what prospects does fast food offer? What are the attitudes and job satisfaction of fast food workers? What are the relations between management and workers like? And what are the prospects for greater union involvement in this growing sector? As part of a larger study on catering workers, I talked informally to workers and managers in three outlets of a large hamburger chain, observed their methods of work and carried out 60 structured interviews.



David Hoffman

Fantasising helps the workers make it through the day

One third of the respondents were black or Asian, including six of the 15 managers, and half of them were women. All the workers were under 22, and 70 per cent of the described their work as their 'first real job'. None was married and the overwhelming majority lived with relatives but had no dependants. Three quarters of them had been in their jobs for less than a year.

Wages for both managers and staff were low, although not as low as in other catering jobs. Workers averaged £1.85 per hour while managers earned between £6,800 and £8,200 per year — working an average 65-hour week. In spite of the low wages (which is a well-documented feature of the catering industry as a whole), relatively few of those interviewed regarded pay as the main problem with their job. Compared with 60 per cent who expressed dissatisfaction with the job itself and 20 per cent with management, fewer than 15 per cent of the staff saw bad pay as the main problem with their job.

The prospect of unemployment, the lack of alternatives and a generalised fear of the future seemed to dominate the outlooks of most of the respondents and depress their expectations. This was true even of some of the managers: 'You can't afford to look for interesting jobs these days. I started here just for the cash to finance my band. I have this stupid little dream of making a living by writing songs and playing music' said a junior manager, adding 'sometimes I feel used; I'd go mad if I thought that I'd have to work here for ten years.'

They have to fantasise to get through work which 60 per cent of them described as dull and monotonous: 'You soon start daydreaming; you can do the job with your eyes shut. It's a means to an end kind of thing. Most people do it because of the money and the friends; otherwise you can't wait for the break to go back home', said a young man, who also commented about management: 'They are friendly on the surface but underneath they don't care about you. If they saw you in the street, most of them wouldn't say hello to you'.

Such feelings were quite common. In spite of a training programme that looked thorough on paper, most workers found that training was poor or non-existent; within a week or two they had 'picked up the ropes' and there was little else to learn. Three quarters of them saw their jobs as unskilled; as one of them commented: 'It's not an *easy* job, but it's very monotonous. We have no breaks when we are busy and the heat is bad if you work on production; the pressure is high. If there was more variety and skill, people here would be less short-tempered.'

Even some managers commented that the careful planning of production and service left them no room for initiative: 'The problem with this job is that it lacks creativity. It doesn't really have much to do with catering. Here I am a glorified cashier and supervisor; I can't utilise my skills and training.'

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David Hoffman

Hardly catering—more like a production line

What then was the overall effect of fast food technology for those working in the industry? There can be no doubt that the highly regimented and mechanised catering of fast food offers few of the attractions of making a meal. 'This is not cooking, it is imitation cooking' said one respondent. 'This is not a kitchen, it is a production line' said another and added wryly, 'but we don't get production money!'

Yet human ingenuity will come out in the least promising circumstances and fast food workers are not mere passive victims of their technological environment. Within the constraints of jobs conceived and designed in far-away offices, most of the respondents were determined to 'humanise' their surroundings and insisted on doing things 'their own way'. 'I feel like a robot, sometimes, but rules are meant to be broken. Of course there are short cuts in this job as in all jobs', said one of the workers, and 60 per cent of them mentioned to me a variety of shortcuts which they employed, 'when management is not breathing down your neck'. An attempt to exercise some control, however small, over their work was an important feature of work in fast food.

And there was another survival mechanism: the prevalent temporary and limited involvement in the work. 'I couldn't last here for more than a year, but for the time being my job is OK. I have a casual approach and my expectations are low' was a typical comment. Staff turn-over was extremely high in all three stores I studied, with between 40 per cent and 70 per cent of new recruits leaving within a month. Yet even the longest serving staff saw their jobs as temporary; 'lasting' was a word used by many to express their feelings towards their work, one of whom described it as 'an assault course'. What made an intrinsically unpleasant job bearable for many was precisely this feeling of temporariness.

Unlike many of the older staff I interviewed in hospital and school-meals catering, many of whom felt 'trapped' in unpleasant jobs by their family commitments, lack of skills and qualifications, the younger respondents in the fast food stores felt free; they felt that they had a *choice* about when to leave their jobs. Although their attitudes and feelings were moulded by the grim realities of the job market, they felt no overwhelming awe at the prospect of unemployment.

For them, unemployment is the realistic future in which low-paid, dead-end jobs are a temporary break. Living at home with their families, they spent their earnings on leisure activities, clothes, records, a good night out. As soon as their jobs became unbearable — and the tolerance level varied from person to person — they left. In spite of management's efforts to provide a 'career structure', not one of the respondents took promotion seriously. It is simply incompatible with the short-term, casual approach that made the job tolerable at all.

THIS SHORT-TERM, casual approach makes unionisation of fast-food workers difficult. A spokesperson from one union with members in catering said 'many of the fast food employees are young people who leave after a few days, so that when you visit a week or two later you meet a whole new set of faces.' In addition, the extreme hostility with which catering employers, especially of the fast food conglomerates, regard unions is well known. 'The mere mention of the word "union" is enough to get you the sack in fast food' said one of the interviewees. A recruitment officer from another of the major unions in catering said: 'McDonald's and the fast food companies are very astute at fending off union overtures; many employ special consultancy agencies to keep unions out and staff indoctrination is common.'

Yet the workers themselves were keen to join unions — 80 per cent of those interviewed thought that they needed union help over pay

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and conditions of work and 60 per cent that they needed union protection. More than two thirds of the staff said that if there was a union representing them, they would join it. 'We have no say whatsoever. It is difficult to be represented with the labour turnover that we have; there is no shower here, no air-conditioning and no first-aid. Of course I would join a union if there was one. I would probably start it', said one of the interviewees. Every one of them said that there was not enough consultation between management and staff.

Seven of the 15 managers I interviewed also said that they would join a union if there was one, while nine felt that a union could help them over pay and conditions of work. Twelve of them complained about the long and irregular hours they worked — sometimes up to 60 or 70 per week, without overtime pay. Unlike their staff, however, eleven of them found their jobs interesting most of the time.

While fast food workers are not anti-union, unions have been reluctant to take up their cause. Fewer than 20,000 workers in hotel and catering belong to unions (under 10 per cent of the total workforce) and the great majority of those work in the public sector, in hospitals and school-meals. The success of the TGWU in recruiting virtually all 600 employees of the EMI-owned Angus Steak House chain and in negotiating a closed-shop agreement with the employer has not been repeated. The employers' well-publicised anti-union attitudes have succeeded in discouraging unions which do not want more debacles like the prolonged and unsuccessful effort to win negotiating rights at Garner Steak House.

The unions' traditional attitudes and their pre-occupation with male workers in manufacturing industries has not helped the cause of catering workers either. Part-time, foreign and immigrant workers, above all women and teenagers, have long been seen as 'poor union material'. But unions may have to revise radically their notion of union recruitment and what and how to negotiate. With unemployment increasing, almost the only expanding area of work is in part-time jobs, usually taken by women, foreign or young workers declined by nearly 15 per cent from its 1979 peak to 11.3 million in 1983. Union members and rights are going to have to be fought for.

There is some evidence that unions' attitudes are changing. Bill Northcliffe of the Transport and General said: 'We are planning to embark on a new recruiting drive in catering and fast food following the government's decision to abolish the Wages Councils, which will leave these workers totally unprotected.' In view of these attempts to force people to 'price themselves into jobs', the position of catering workers is unlikely to improve, until unions take up their cause. Stuck in boring and monotonous jobs, unable to influence their working conditions and terms of employment, disenfranchised from collective bargaining, fast food workers will continue in their attitude of minimal, casual involvement in their work. □

The detailed findings of this research are discussed in my report Pressure Cooking, *published by the Food Policy Unit, Hollings Faculty, Manchester Polytechnic, Old Hall Lane, Manchester 14, £2.80.*

EDUCATION

NEW CHAMPION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS

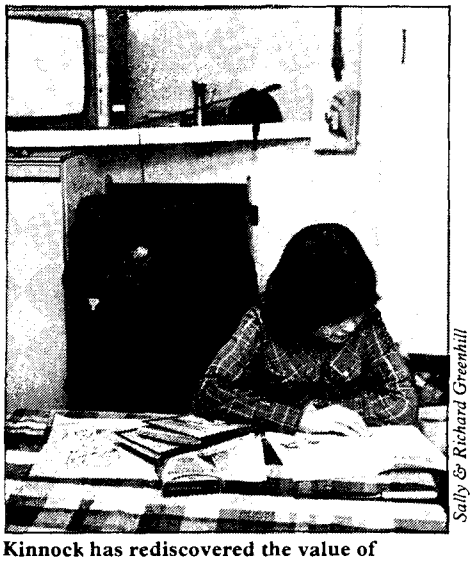
Barry Hugill previews Labour's new schools policy, designed to improve 'standards' and win back working-class votes

NEXT TUESDAY Neil Kinnock will unveil Labour's re-vamped education policy. Over 12 months in gestation, the policy, 'A charter for pupils and their parents', marks the abandonment of the '60s rhetoric of education as an agent of social change. Labour's 'new realism' is evident on every one of the charter's 15 pages. A determination to win back the working-class voters who deserted the party in droves in 1979 and 1983 is its hallmark.

The 1983 election disaster is the key to understanding the rationale behind the charter. Kinnock, the party's education spokeserson at the time, was furious at the failure to exploit the Tories' shocking neglect of primary and secondary schools. He reckoned that this was potentially Labour's trump card (along with the health service). Yet he had to organise his own press conference, in a London primary school, once he realised that the Walworth Road campaign team had no plans to make education an election issue.

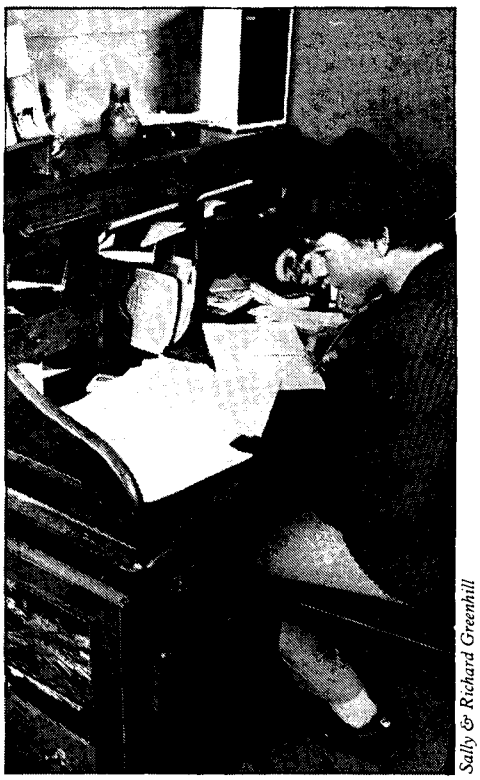
He believes that the Conservatives have to be tackled on their own ground. Ever since the heady days of going comprehensive in the early '60s, the Tories have championed 'standards'. They have labelled Labour as the party prepared to trade in excellence for social equality, ready to ride roughshod over parents' desire that their children should do well at school.

The reality is, of course, very different but the opinion polls show that a majority of the electorate believes that Labour will sacrifice quality in the interests of greater egalitarianism. No amount of protesting that the Labour Party has always believed in high educational standards, not just for the few but for all, has convinced them otherwise.



Sally & Richard Greenhill

Kinnock has rediscovered the value of homework, whether on the kitchen table . . .



Sally & Richard Greenhill

. . . or, for better off kids, at a desk in their room

SO NEIL KINNOCK began to talk about standards. He had the idea of placing a statutory obligation on local authorities to ensure that all children were educated to a 'national minimum standard' in the basic subjects; that to this end all pupils were guaranteed access to computers and the other gadgets of the new technology and had the requisite textbooks and laboratory equipment. He wanted, by law, to stipulate the maximum size of class permitted and to guarantee nursery provision for all children whose parents wanted it.

The idea was killed in infancy by the powerful local government lobby within the party who were worried at the threat to local autonomy. Kinnock, well aware that the Tory shire counties, and a few Labour metropolitan ones, provide a service well below his proposed national minimum, proposed to knock them into shape by what appeared suspiciously like rate-capping in reverse — local authorities not coming up to scratch would have lost their education grant and control of schools would have been handed over to an independent board.

The charter owes a lot to that stillborn plan. Gone are the centralist overtones with the implied threat of penalties for offending authorities, but the essential core remains. 'All pupils and parents', begins the charter, 'must be given rights which schools and local authorities have a duty to implement'. But the emphasis is firmly on rights rather than duties and nothing is said about the mechanism by which, for example, Devon would be brought up to the standard of Sheffield.

The rights of pupils are predictable and desirable: equal access to a balanced curriculum for all regardless of race and sex; classes of a manageable size; the option at 16 between two

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more years at school/college or a decent vocational training scheme; grants for 16-18 year olds remaining in full-time education; proper trade union wages for those opting for training schemes. Nothing new, nor surprising here.

The section on parents' rights is another matter. Remember the Tory slur — Labour believes that children should be sent to the school the council wants them to go to so that a good 'social mix' can be achieved? Well it might have been true once but no longer. 'All parents', says the charter, 'should have the right to express a preference for a school they wish their child to attend and to receive special consideration if they live near the school'. And it's no longer only Sir Keith Joseph who believes that parents should have a larger share in the running of schools; Labour is now committed to giving them 'substantial representation on governing bodies'.

The icing on the cake which Kinnock's successor Giles Radice hopes to turn into a vote winner is the right of all parents 'to a free and well-resourced education for their children without being expected to pay for text books, equipment and other necessary resources'. He will stress this 'right' and the promise of extended provision for chidlren under five during next month's county council elections.

The likely impact of a policy on parents is seen by Kinnock and Radice as more important than socialist purity. (A commitment to, at least, limiting the power of public schools was only written into the final draft.) This is best demonstrated by the curious rediscovery of the value of homework. For years homework has symbolised for most on the Left the hated grammar school ethos. To do it properly a pupil needs a quiet, well heated room, free from interruption by brothers and sisters. These are difficult conditions to create in small council flats and houses. Homework discriminates against working-class children the argument goes.

Or it did until last year when Dr David Hargreaves, an Oxford academic, produced a report for ILEA, the inner London education authority, on performance in school in which he made the extraordinary claim that pupils who do not consistently do homework lose a whole year of education over a five-year compulsory period. Every school should have a homework policy he said, though he had little research evidence to back his claim. Hargreaves subsequently joined ILEA as chief inspector of schools and has become something of a guru to Frances Morrell's administration. Homework is now very much in favour in ILEA and, as from next Tuesday, it becomes the aim of the Labour Party that every school should 'implement a homework policy'.

IT IS ONLY when the charter turns to exams that the tension between the 'popular' and the 'necessary' surfaces. The polls show that most parents value exam success yet socialists have traditionally believed them the curse of British schooling and the biggest single obstacle to a genuinely egalitarian system. How do you get round that? The charter fudges, not very convincingly.

A promise is made that every school leaver will receive a 'profile of achievement' recording all of his/her achievements at school — academic, vocational, dramatic, sporting, personal. The charter says that in the long term 'the continuous assessment element of the record of achievement will be seen as being of greater value as "educational currency" than the more traditional public examinations'. Does this mean that 'traditional public examinations' will be left alone by Labour? How will the universities, the biggest single obstacle to examination reform, be 'convinced' that the record of achievement is a better guide to a student's potential than 'A' levels?

The questions are important because Sir Keith Joseph has grasped the nettle and in his own muddled way set about trying to sort out the tortuous maze of 'O' and 'A' levels and everything in between. If Labour intends to sell itself as the champion of parents' rights it can't duck the question every parent, and pupil, asks eventually: 'Which exams do we take at the end of term?'. □

This England

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□Any suggestion that she might abdicate irritates her and her weekly meetings with Margaret Thatcher make her distant and cool. The final misery for the Queen would be if she had to spend the evening at the opera. — *Daily Mirror* (George Moor)

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MINERS

DELIBERATE VICTIMISATION

John Rose examines the NCB's post-strike policy

OVER 700 SACKED miners remain outside the pit gates one month after the end of the coal strike. The NUM ballot decision two weeks ago not to support them with a 50p per head levy means that there will be no national union campaign behind them.

Lack of public concern with the fate of these men reflects the success that the National Coal Board and the government have had in seeking to present them as violent criminal types who deserve to stay out in the cold.

But is this the real reason for the National Coal Board's refusal to rehire them? Take the case of Ken Petney, a sacked striking miner from the Blidworth colliery in Nottinghamshire. Ken was very active in the early stages of the strike. He and his family let pickets from Yorkshire stay in their home. Then, following a fight in a pub involving working miners, Ken was charged with malicious wounding and grievous bodily harm.

He was detained for 36 hours (an action is pending over this entirely wrongful imprisonment), finally charged, and then had to wait nearly a year before his case came to the Nottingham Crown Court. During this time he was fired by his colliery manager, Brian Turner.

At the trial, the evidence of the working miners was so obviously riddled with inaccuracies and contradictions that the jury was sometimes reduced to laughter. Then, when two crucial police witnesses failed to show up, trial judge A.T. Smith advised the jury to find Ken Petney not guilty (a most unusual direction to be given before *any* police evidence had been heard). The jury, of course, obliged.

This happened the day before the strike ended, last month. Ken still hasn't got his job back and is unable to claim unemployment and supplementary benefit because of a ruling at the Department of Employment that a dispute still exists! Ken Petney will take his case to an industrial tribunal. But even if they find in his favour, the NCB is not obliged to rehire him.

Ray Morris, a miner from Maltby colliery near Rotherham, remains sacked too. He was charged with 'besetting' (shouting 'scab') and threatening behaviour, after a crowd of striking miners in his village had shouted at Bob Montgomery, a neighbour of Ray's who broke the strike in February and returned to work. Ray, his son and daughter were all arrested at this time. Whilst Ray was in the police cell, the local community policeman, PC Brian Codd, came in to see him and told him that Bob Montgomery had been down to the police station and seemed very upset about the arrests. Ray's wife, Joyce, told the *New Stateman* that Bob Montgomery had called at her door whilst her family were at the police station and said, 'I'm going to the police station, they did nothing wrong.'

Ray's case has not come to court yet. The 'victim' appears to have not wanted the police to proceed with charges, let alone get Ray Morris sacked. Yet Ray Morris was sacked when the strike ended.

NOW RAY MORRIS just happens to be the treasurer of the South Yorkshire Winders Branch of the NUM. Ken Petney just happened to be offering his home to Yorkshire pickets. A fully comprehensive list of sacked strikers is not available, but from the evidence that we do have, a pattern begins to emerge.

In Scotland, there seems little doubt that NCB Director Albert Wheeler has used the sackings to enfeeble the union. Here the NCB sacked 204 men and none have got their jobs back. 43 per cent of them are elected union officials. No less than 71 per cent were leaders of the official strike committees. (Over 95 per cent of the charges against sacked Scottish miners are for non-violent offences.)

They include men like Bert Smith, from Killock colliery, Ayrshire, Captain of the Mines Rescue Brigade. He was sacked after he was spotted on a film, having taken part in an attempt, with police permission and surrounded by police officers, to persuade strikebreakers not to go to work. He has never been charged with any offence. He was, however, treasurer of his local strike fund.

In Kent, the 42 sacked men are overwhelmingly those who took part in the occupations of the pits at Tilmanstone and Betteshanger.

BUT THIS is not a national pattern. In North Derby, to a lesser extent in Yorkshire and the North East, some sacked miners have been re-instated — including union activists. In South Wales 45 — the majority — of the sacked miners have already been given their jobs back.

The conclusion drawn by some of the union's officials in these areas is that re-instatement depends more and more on local deals, as one official put it, 'a softly, softly approach — away from the glare of the press.' Ken Moses, the NCB Director in North Derby, is cited, who, although a hardliner during the strike, is nevertheless open to negotiation over re-instating sacked strikers.

In North Derby 86 out of 131 sacked strikers have been re-instated. Union officials are confident that, in time, they will get most of the remaining men their jobs back however serious their convictions might be. (This excludes, incidentally, a further 31 NUM members sacked by two local private mine owners. None of the 31 was arrested. Their only offence was to support the strike.) And Phillip Weekes, the NCB Director in South Wales, is also looked on benignly as the one remaining old-fashioned Coal Board man most likely to listen sympathetically to the sacked miners' case. (This is not a view shared by the pit deputies in South Wales following the decision to close the Bedwas colliery in Mid Glamorgan, a decision which explicitly reneges on the deal that their union, NACODS, signed with the NCB last November.)

Meanwhile hundreds of other arrested miners on bail, who have returned to work pending court cases which will be heard throughout the year, are terrified that they too will be sacked if convicted. Prosecuting counsels are reporting a build up of pressure to 'plea-bargain' whereby, say, a miner charged with assaulting a police officer on a picket line (irrespective of how strong the miner's defence case might be) agrees in advance to plead guilty to a lesser 'non-violent' charge like obstruction if the assault charge is dropped. Of course, this does *not* guarantee that he will keep his job. He just hopes it may. □

'And ever more came out of that same door wherein I went' . . .

This was the plaint of a man who could not escape the common round of conventional answers to his questions. Perhaps he was stuck in beliefs — maybe even sacred ones — but he was stuck. Is there no way out?

Perhaps; if you would like to see, write to:

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MOLESWORTH

BREAD NOT BOMBS AT EASTERTIDE

Polly Woolley looks forward after the CND rally

AS THE LAST CND coach rumbled away into the evening, as police clambered into the 375th bus, as the last sack of wheat for Eritrea thudded into the lorry bound for Tilbury docks, silence singularly failed to fall on Molesworth. Behind the barbed wire and weld-mesh security fence, the generators for the brilliant alkaline white lights hummed. Local residents weighed the cost of being visited by over 20,000 CND demonstrators and in returning cars and coaches police and protesters asked 'What next?'

Molesworth has always presented problems to the authorities. It is a remote base, conveniently near the A1 for rapid dispersal of cruise missiles, but surrounded by narrow twisting farm roads that will have to be rebuilt to accommodate the launcher and control vehicles that are really only at home on open Arizona freeways. Overall control will be based at Alconbury ten miles away. A new connecting road will apparently be constructed between the two sites but this in itself will pose further difficulties.

At the moment, the authorities seem to be pouring all their resources into the weld-mesh fence — a comment by default on the nightly incursions women are still making into the Greenham Common base, undeterred by Michael Heseltine's stringent new by-laws. These prohibit virtually any attempt to make even symbolic protests at significant military bases. Tying wool to the wire is now 'criminal

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damage' and had police not turned a blind eye on Easter Monday, every person who planted a rainbow pennant at Molesworth could have been charged with an offence.

But illegal protest usually presents CND with more of a headache. Although National CND has publicly supported Non-Violent Direct Action, a form of protest which its conference has confirmed as crucial, CND has also been anxious to be a socially acceptable, consensus protest movement. It has been, at best, ambivalent about the obvious anarchism of some of its most committed activists.

Molesworth has been seen as an opportunity to use the radicalism of grass-roots CND members — especially the men, whose exclusion from Greenham Common has long rankled with many. Yet Molesworth has seemed to confirm the Greenham women's fears that only an all-women's camp can prohibit or control potential violence. One of CND's knottier problems was the difficulty the Rainbow Villagers had in subduing a lawless and occasionally violent tiny group (largely if not wholly male).

The policy of the Rainbow Villagers of treating this group with gentle toleration was slowly converting them; but it is hard to conduct experiments in alternative life-styles under the glare of televison lights focussed on irate neighbours. The eviction of the Rainbow Village did, at least, extricate CND from what was a very labyrinthine problem.

But that has left it without a permanent encampment on the spot. CND had great hopes for the Molesworth Pledge Campaign whose signatories pledge themselves to visit Molesworth regularly on a specified day of the week. The logistic difficulties of this are proving enormous especially because it in effect excludes those with full-time jobs or children (the very 'respectable' people CND needs to keep involved). Those who do go tend to want to get there and back in daylight — few fancy a long journey home in the early hours to be followed by a day's work. The Pledge is now being amended to allow supporters to come on different days of the week and to mount protests in their home towns. Organisers have also stressed that although the Pledge declares a willingness to take part in Non-Violent Direct Action, such action is not compulsory. Some CND members have found this lack of united 'rules' hard to accept.

Devising campaigns that combine disciplined and effective action, spontaneous and expressive protest and social acceptability would probably defeat the most resourceful political strategist. Yet there is one outstanding example of acceptable and symbolically potent direct action — the Wheat for the Starving Campaign. At Easter 1984, several months before the world-wide publicity over starvation in Africa, the first wheat was planted at Molesworth, symbolizing the potential use of the land. That wheat was harvested and sent to Eritrea last Autumn and a further 64 acres (corresponding to the number of missiles) were then ploughed up and planted. This was largely destroyed by the army during the February eviction. The remainder was bulldozed into the ground a few weeks ago for no apparent reason. However, the amount that should have been grown there will be sent, collected through donations throughout the country. □

Paying for the empire builders

Phillip Whitehead

SOMETHING had to give. The BBC can hardly be surprised that it did not get the £65 licence fee for which it was asking. This time it was not possible to pretend that the range of operations for which 'modest expansion' was sought were all a seamless web of public service broadcasting. Many of the best representatives of that ethic who remain in the BBC cringe at the face the Corporation now presents to the world. It is the face of wall-to-wall Wogan, of a desperate reliance on personalities rather than ideas, of a steady pressure on the serious and the profound to move over to the margins.

Dispirited journalists at Lime Grove are now on strike after the worst-handled dismissals in 20 years. (The BBC Press Office was still denying that the reporters had been terminated on the day after *Broadcast* magazine revealed their names.) A public service system so demoralised in its news and current affairs departments has problems of style and content that go beyond the level of funding.

It is a tragedy of a kind. For right through the great empire of the BBC are people doing work of high purpose, setting standards still. If they find their budget axed, their slot in the schedules gone, their superiors off for the day in the Corporation limo at Cheltenham races, they will struggle on regardless. The alternatives seem worse. Indeed, it may be that the alternatives *are* worse. The government has set up entirely the wrong kind of enquiry into the BBC, under the chairmanship of a committed privatiser, Professor Peacock. If this is the kind of short, sharp shock which the Tories tend to demand of their enquiries (like the report by ITAP — Information Technology Advisory Panel — into cable television which so misjudged the potential and problems of that field) it may simply set out to show that the BBC could be a market leader in a market economy of broadcasting. Of course it could. The BBC is already so commercial that we would hardly notice where the John Player sponsorship ended and the Hamlet commercial began.

Asa Briggs's forthcoming book on the first 50 years of the BBC reminds us that, when the Selsdon Committee first looked at the question of how to fund the infant television service in 1935, sponsored programmes 'for which the Broadcasting authority neither makes nor receives payment' were recommended in preference to an increased general licence fee. Since then it has been the general licence fee that has increased. Sponsorship has been a somewhat shame faced supplement. If the Peacock Committee is put off from general advertising by the massed choirs of the duopoly (since ITV would face an even steeper decline in revenue if the BBC were directly competitive) sponsorship will be the likely alternative.

The problem is that the Peacock Committee's study of funding will leave those who give evidence to it split neatly into two camps. The admen will want to fulfil their dream of lower rate cards, the broadcasters to maintain the separation of sources of finance. Of course we shall all line up on their side. The effect of reliance on advertising would be to make the BBC even more crassly commercial than it sometimes seems today. The role of licence revenue would be progressively diminished. The weakening of ITV would in turn endanger those funds now re-distributed from it to finance Channel 4. But are these the only questions we should be asking? The true folly of the Peacock Committee is that it is not asking a quite different question; *what should public service television be like?* Ought we to be able to tell the difference? Should it come in many diverse forms or only in one? Are those who believe in it and practise it within the mass of the BBC able to function best under the shadow of the new Cotton/Grade philosophy?

Once we begin to ask whether one single body, embracing so much of radio and television, can and should be the only recipient of public service revenue we are asking questions which come to the heart of the BBC's failure to make its case. Ought it to continue to run those many things which it has over the years acquired, with the kind of absent-minded aggrandisement that puts empires together, to keep them away from other people? Radio One? Local and community radio? Too many of us allow our affinity for sheer size, wistful would-be monopolism, to blind us to alternatives. *Making Waves**, the latest publication from the Radical Science Collective, makes a powerful case on the Left for a new kind of small scale community radio. With public funding, London alone could support some dozen or more such stations. The collective argues that 'open-access co-operatively managed radio stations' are rejected by both the pressure groups dominated by broadcasting professionals and by the BBC itself. The latter could not now control the new forms of community broadcasting and independent production; so it stifles what it cannot dominate. Only a diversified BBC in a pluralist system could act as the midwife of new variants of the public service ideal. It is ridiculous to think public service local radio in London is embraced by BBC Radio London alone. We do not think of an alternative, because the alternative of raw commercialism is all that comes to mind. It is time we did, or Peacock will leave us with the kind of packaged and caponised broadcasting system we shall otherwise deserve. □

**Making Waves, The Politics of Communications*, published by Free Association Books, 26 Freegrove Road, London N7.

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DIARY

I've always felt ambiguous about awards. It's wonderful if good people win them but so often they just celebrate the status quo. Here, the so-called press awards are for *newspapers,* the investigative journalism of our own Duncan Campbell doesn't qualify for such national distinction. Arguments in their favour are that they really do make a difference to the recognition of merit in provincial papers and that while one expects Max Hastings to be slapped on the back for his Falklands uplift, John Pilger can also get recognised for his Cambodia coverage. But this year's lot seemed extraordinarily tame. Jon Swain is made reporter of the year for his 'scoop' on the NUM's Libyan caper, regarded by the judges as of 'quite exceptional importance'. I put 'scoop' in inverted commas as radio Libya announced Gadafy had received the miners' delegation two days before the *Sunday Times,* according to the BBC's monitoring service. But never mind, the NUM was caught with its pants down. What I do mind is that Paul Foot scooped everyone with his documented proof that the government was manipulating the railway pay negotiations in an effort to isolate the miners. The government was proven to be lying when it denied any involvement with the miners' strike. To whom is this unimportant?

○

Foot apart, weren't the judges offered anything of an oppositional or investigative kind to honour? The silence of the newspapers is extraordinary. A sky high column of smoke signals that spell corruption emanated from Thatcher's trip to Oman. Only Ed Harriman of Granada television looked for the fire. The Falklands War began with government bungling and ended with lies. Why has nothing of a sustained, investigative nature been seen on it in the British press, worthy of an award? Massive illegal telephone tapping is exposed by the weeklies and, again, by television. The campaigning press award goes to the *Daily Express* for breathalysers. I'll tell you one thing, if Clive Ponting's jury had been sponsored by Fleet Street, it would have found him guilty.

○

I'm not persuaded, though, that the Left should institute its own 'counter-awards'. It would be preferable to make the official ceremony less self-congratulatory. If there are honours why not announce dishonours as well? There could be an award for the most pernicious distortion of the year, the most grovelling interview, the most faithful reproduction of a press handout, the most vile degradation of women. Speaking of which, of the 16 awards only one went to a woman, Ena Kendall as colour magazine writer for 'A Room of My Own', and out of 24 commendations only two went to women.

○

What do the following developments have in common? That the largest, least known company in Britain, to wit, BTR, has acquired Dunlops; that the excellent Adrian Mole has flashed his red socks and taken over History Workshop; that as an inducement to subscribe to the *Times Educational Supplement* you are offered a free copy of a Collins Road Atlas? The answer is, 'something in the air'. An epidemic of takeovers has seized publishing. The big Penguin deal is just the latest in moves that become more multinational, as firms try to dominate the world English language market. Should BTR find their attempt to re-tread Dunlops expensive, they may look around for cash. In an earlier takeover of Tillings they picked up Heinemanns and, just as Thomsons have sold off their publishing arm to Penguins, so BTR may now look around for a buyer. An obvious one is Murdoch, who has 42 per cent of Collins, who own Fontana and Granada, and one third of Pan paperbacks. *The Times* crossword is linked with Collins dictionaries, the Collins Road Atlas is advertised with *TES* and *THES* subscriptions. This is vertical integration of an ominous kind for the reading public. Heinemanns also has a third of Pan. If the dirty digger bought it, therefore, he'd control Pan, as well as Fontana, Granada, etc, not to speak of Picador, at present the finest international imprint in Britain.

ROGER WODDIS

What shall we do with Mother?

Mrs Thatcher in Malaysia likened British unions to children who had to be treated with 'kindness and love, but also firmness'.

What shall we do with Mother?
I fear for the state of her mind.
She glares when she changes my nappies,
And swears when she pats my behind.
She carries a cane for the purpose of pain,
But has to be cruel to be kind.

What shall we do with Mother?
Shall we send for a doctor or two?
She claims to have millions of children,
And invariably knows what to do:
She feeds us stale bread and sends us to bed.
We might as well live in a shoe.

What shall we do with Mother?
There's a lunatic look in her eye.
I've heard there are grown men who grovel,
Whenever Her Worship goes by.
Philosophers drool when she talks like a fool,
Though nobody seems to know why.

What shall we do with Mother?
She's given to heaving her breast,
And disciplines tots in the nursery
By putting them under arrest.
It's clear from her face she's a suitable case
And a menace — but Mother knows best.

○

I am going to abuse my privilege as a diarist and pick on a fellow contributor, Bernard Crick. Last week, he opened his review on Ben Pimlott's new biography of Hugh Dalton with these words: 'How inadequate are general theories to explain how individuals form their political allegiances'. The supposed paradox is that Dalton was upper class — an Etonian whose father was a royal flunkey — yet became known as a booming radical. This happy contradiction has long been with us, from Fred Engels through Will Morris to Tariq Ali and the Left would be a deal worse off without it, as I have no doubt Crick would agree. What is objectionable is the intellectual implications of his remark. He seems to presume that we are stuck in the days of Stalin and Talcott Parsons. Perhaps the difference is a generation one. For me, 'general theory', from Sartre on Marxism and Gramsci on politics to Raymond Williams on culture and John Berger on aesthetics, just to keep the list short, took as its starting point the rejection of any sort of class reduction. To counterpose general analysis to the reality of the individual, as Crick does, has a clear if unstated implication. Put aside theory and go back to a history of chaps: good chaps, bad chaps and, of course, odd chaps, for, and this is the only abstraction allowed, 'chaps *will* be chaps'. There are two reasons to be annoyed with this kind of approach, if indeed Crick really means it. The first is that the best general theory of mid-century Labour highlights its Victorian (and Oxford) philanthropic role. From this perspective neither Dalton nor his protégé Gaitskell are particularly odd, rather they are two different Hughs of the same shade. The second is to do with the present rather than the past, and the fateful conservatism of dismissing theory. But I'll leave that for the moment in case the phrase was just an opening flourish. Over to you Bernard.

Islander

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FAMINE AND CORRUPTION

Can Sudan hold together as a secular state after the fall of President Numeiri? Michael Prest analyses the huge problems facing Africa's largest country

SUDAN'S POST INDEPENDENCE history since 1956 does not encourage the view that its politicians have learned the skills required to maintain the democratic unity of the country. After the 16 years of repression under the regime of the ousted President Numeiri, any successful government will need to be broadly based if it is to command sufficient support to carry through the required programme of national reconstruction and constitutional reform.

The tinder for the coup that overthrew President Numeiri was ignited by steep increases in the price of bread, sugar, petrol and other necessities, put through largely on the insistence of the United States and the International Monetary Fund. No one doubts that Sudan's chaotic finances need sorting out. But the timing of these particular price rises seemed deliberately provocative, were it not for the fact that the consequences were so predictable.

Sudan now has over a million Ethiopian refugees. Many travelled only to die on arrival

Both photos: Camera Press

Drought, famine, corruption and dictatorship had become the hallmarks of Numeiri's increasingly arbitrary and repressive government. It was the famine which captured the world's attention. The United Nations Development Programme estimates that between four and seven million people are threatened with starvation or severe malnourishment over the next six months. To meet their needs will require at the very least 600,000 tonnes of cereals to be imported, distributed to the point of consumption and stored before June when the rains for which everyone prays will make many areas impassable.

Whole communities have abandoned their villages and land in search of food and water. They frequently fail to find either. The survivors can be seen huddled in pathetic shelters in the wadis and beside the tracks of the parched landscape. With the temperature now climbing to 120 degrees fahrenheit and the *haboubs* or dust storms increasing in ferocity, the prospect is bleak.

It is the children who suffer most. The United Nations Children's Fund estimates that 80 per cent of children are suffering from malnutrition, about a fifth severely. In some villages infant mortality has been 50 per cent. Diseases such as measles, whooping cough, dysentery, hepatitis, scurvy and bilharzia are rife. In the war-torn south, a sleeping sickness epidemic rages.

ONLY NOW are the long-term implications of the disaster becoming clear. Across great reaches of the country the means of agricultural production have been virtually destroyed along with the communities. Survivors long ago sold their animals, cooking pots, agricultural implements to buy food. They have had to eat the seed corn, and even the donkies.

It is likely that many Sudanese will never return to their home area, exacerbating the problems of social disruption and competition for the scarce cultivable land from which two thirds of the people earn a living. Great tracts of land have become deserts.

The Numeiri government went out of its way to stress the natural dimensions of the tragedy. It is true that the rains have failed for four years, so that even the mighty Nile is at its lowest in living memory. It is also true that the conservative patterns of tilling, grazing and land holding practised by many farmers have exhausted an always fragile economy. Sudan is a poor country, with a *per capita* annual income of less than $400 and outside help would have been necessary in any event to cope with the disaster befalling the whole Sahel.

In addition, Sudan has responded with considerable generosity to the needs of the more than one million refugees, mainly Tigreans and Eritreans, who have flooded in from Ethiopia since last October. In some places, particularly in the Eastern camps, the refugees, though in poor shape, are being better cared for than are neighbouring Sudanese villages.

But in recent years the Numeiri regime had grown introverted, concerned with no policy save to preserve the General and his cronies in power. The administration had broken down and the legacy of a good civil service and an educated élite which was instrumental in bringing Sudan to independence was destroyed by erratic and corrupt decisions.

Less than a decade ago Sudan dreamed of combining the waters of the Nile and abundant land with Arab petro-dollars to turn itself into the 'breadbasket' of the Arab world. Now Sudan groans under external debts of $9,000 million (officially put at $7,000 million). Its export revenues of $800 million a year are less than its debt service payments.

When nature could not be blamed, Numeiri accused his enemies in Libya, Ethiopia and Iran of plotting against him. But after 16 years of mounting paranoia, during which Numeiri has swung from being pro-Russian to being fanatically pro-American, the Sudanese had had enough. They blamed the chronic shortage of fuel, which compels drivers to queue two days for petrol, on the government. They blamed the evident dilapidation of the country, the potholed roads and decaying public buildings, on a regime which had not even been able to maintain the irrigation systems properly.

WHAT FINALLY turned opinion decisively against Numeiri was his abrupt introduction of Islamic law, the Shari'a, in 1983. Not even his cabinet was told of the decision in advance. His motives were supposed to be a mixture of belated religious devoutness (he is 55 and not well) and a political ploy of trying to outflank the opposition of the fundamentalist Moslem Brotherhood.

That stratagem backfired. Christians were deeply suspicious of the Sufis who as a result emerged as Numeiri's advisers; even Moslems were dismayed by the cruelty with which the Shari'a was enforced; and everyone missed their beer. Above all, the move was interpreted in the largely black and Christian southern Sudan, always more a part of black Africa than of Moslem Sudan, as a clear sign that the 1972 unity agreement, which ended the previous North-South civil war, was now worthless.

The leftist Sudan People's Liberation Movement, whose immediate declared aim was

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to overthrow Numeiri, still effectively has control over the southern third of the country. The army, upon whom Numeiri entirely depended, remains unhappy about the humilitations it has suffered in the renewed civil war. John Garang, the Dinka leader of the SPLM, has firmly established himself as one of the opposition voices with which the new junta in Khartoum, or any civilian government, would have to find an accommodation.

Any future government, if it is to have a chance, must also have at its core, in addition to the SPLM, the liberal United Democratic Party and the Ansar, led by Saadiq al-Mahdi, a direct descendent of the Mahdi who so exercised the late Victorian imagination.

In the end, it may be the Americans who matter most. Without their money and food, Sudan would long since have collapsed. They supported Numeiri *faut de mieux*, and all the time looked for an alternative. They have been very concerned about the economic disruption caused by forcing upon Sudan an Islamic financial system which eschews interest.

International aid agencies, who have despairingly watched Numeiri dig holes for them to fill in, will also be relieved by his removal. Several were seriously asking themselves whether they could justify further expenditure in Sudan. □

SOUTH ATLANTIC

FISHING FOLLY IN THE FALKLANDS

Peggy Riley reports on a case of damaging inaction

IT'S BEEN ALMOST three years now since the Falklands War ended, and Britain and Argentina are still — diplomatically, at least — at daggers drawn.

There is one thing, however, that could put the two on the same side of the fence if they would only stop not speaking long enough to recognize it. That thing is, quite simply, fish — a traditional symbol of peace.

Having gone to war to reclaim the islands, Britain has since shown reluctance to impose even an interim fishing zone, perhaps out of fear of jeopardizing future talks with Argentina, or perhaps to use fish as a card in those talks.

But in the meantime, Poland, Russia, Spain, Japan and East Germany have been taking advantage of the diplomatic freeze to vacuum up the islands' fish stocks as fast as they can. The plunder is perfectly legal until Britain — or Britain and Argentina together — declare a fisheries zone.

But conservationists say that the environment cannot wait for Britain and Argentina to reach a joint fishing agreement. (Fishing was near the top of the agenda at the talks last July in Berne, but those talks folded like a collapsible fishing rod when the Argentine delegation found out that Britain was really adamant that sovereignty over the islands was totally non-negotiable.)

Simon Lyster is a lawyer-turned-conservationist with the Falkland Islands Foundation, an offshoot of the World Wildlife Fund: 'Because the Falklands is a relatively small land mass in a relatively large expanse of ocean, enormous numbers of seals and penguins tend to congregate on the islands during breeding times. So it's especially important that the feeding areas are protected. Excessive fishing in those areas could do a hell of a lot of damage.'

As far as he's concerned, Lyster says, there's only one course of action for the Foreign Office to take and without delay. 'If Britain and Argentina can come to an agreement, then fine, if they can do it tomorrow. But they can't. In Berne, they couldn't even agree on the time of day, so how can they agree on something as extremely complicated as a fisheries limit?'

'The only thing Britain can do is take unilateral action,' Lyster says. 'Otherwise there aren't going to be any fish left to worry about.'

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS has never had more than a tiny three-mile coastal fishing limit, making it one of the few remaining areas in the world with waters that are *not* jealously guarded by the 200-mile fishing limits that are now standard.

The true extent of the fishing free-for-all going on around the Falklands is only now being realized, partly because it happened so quickly. Catches in the British-held waters are now estimated to be worth £200 million a year. Proper licence fees of five per cent would mean £10 million gross annual income for the Falklanders.

The islanders are distressed at this plunder of their seas, and the loss of potential — and much needed income. (One estimate is that after paying for the administration and policing of a fishing zone, the islanders would still be left with an annual income of £7 million from the sale of licences to foreign fishermen alone, twice what they earn from sheep farming, the largest industry at present.)

The Foreign Office say only that the fishing issue is under consideration, fuelling suspicions in some quarters that the civil servants have not fully comprehended the financial and ecological damage the continued plundering is doing. (Lyster and others say the waters could be exhausted in two or three years if the overfishing continues unabated.)

The Foreign Affairs Select Committee's report on the Falklands dismisses imposing a unilateral fishing zone as too expensive and not a proper job for the Royal Navy. (Never mind that the government has already spent more than a million pounds per Falklander since 1982 and presumably would also stand to benefit if it invested in an industry that could lead to more economic independence for the islands.) The committee report even suggests that the 1,800 islanders ought to get busy and set up a fishing zone and licensing system by themselves, if they are so keen on getting their hands on the revenue that would accrue.

Waiting in the wings to help the islanders get their own licensing system going is Britain's biggest fishing, research and trading firm, J. Marr Seafoods of Hull. So much for the government's argument that it cannot afford to set up a fishing zone. J. Marr is offering to take on the task if only the government would declare the zone.

J. Marr wasted little time in putting a plan together when the company realized it was trading in what were really *British* fish, caught by Russians and Poles. Of course, J. Marr's offer to send a research ship and plane down to the Falklands and to help set up the licensing procedure was not a purely altruistic one; the company realized that, like the islanders, it was suffering a huge commercial loss.

WITH HIS South Atlantic Council, Tory MP Cyril Townsend (Bexleyheath) spends a lot of time trying to get the government to take a more conciliatory line in general toward Argentina. But on the fishing issue Townsend is in complete agreement with the Foreign Office's cautious, if maddeningly *slow,* approach.

After his contoversial visit to Buenos Aires last summer, Townsend is convinced that an abrupt declaration of an exclusive British fishing zone would upset the Argentinians and perhaps further delay the normalization of relations.

'Of course the islanders want it, because it would be a good source of revenue,' says Townsend. 'But who would patrol it? Who would administer it? And it would be quite unrealistic to have a 200-mile protection zone that didn't take account of the Argentine traditional fishing claim in those waters.'

Britain continues to keep its 200-mile exclusion zone around the Falklands, keeping only the Argentinians at bay, while everyone else fishes to their heart's content. Ironically, the Royal Navy's presence actually helps the foreign fleets. They no longer have to worry about the Argentinian patrol planes that surveyed the area back in pre-invasion days.

Simon Lyster of the Falklands Foundation: 'It reminds me of that old English saying. We find the person who steals the goose from the common, but we let the person loose who steals the common from under the goose. That's exactly what we're doing in the Falklands, at enormous cost, We're allowing the Poles and the Russians to strip the common with impunity. It makes no sense. It's just dumb.' □

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INDIA

REPORTS NAME GANDHI'S MEN

Amiya Rao and Amrit Wilson report on the position of Sikhs today in Delhi

SINCE THE MASSACRES of Sikhs in India last November, three different investigations by independent non-party organisations have provided evidence of the murder of thousands of men, women and children by men sponsored and even directed by Rajiv Gandhi's own Congress (I) party leaders. But no one has yet been arrested for the killings and few families have even been provided with any compensation. Those who master-minded the killings, according to the investigations, have become cabinet ministers in Rajiv Gandhi's 'clean cabinet'.

After five days of hearings in January the High Court admitted a writ petition filed by the People's Union of Democratic Rights (a civil liberties organisation which had carried out one of the investigations) seeking an inquiry into the riots. But when the case came up in early February the government took the unusual step of asking the High Court to withdraw its order on the Delhi riots as the matter 'involved the security of the state and the integrity of the country'.

It was duly withdrawn by the bench (High Court Judges Jogeshwar Dayal and B.N. Kirpal) who then dismissed the writ petition because 'the government's decision not to appoint a Commission of Inquiry was political and the court should not question the decision. The court should not be resorted to for political gains'. In court Jogeshwar Dayal's behaviour was remarkable. He smiled broadly at an affidavit about the suffering of a Sikh woman and at one point, when confronted with evidence from journalists, commented 'all journalists are wretched'. (A group of journalists are now pressing defamation charges against Jogeshwar Dayal; they have called Kirpal as a witness.)

Following the High Court decision the authors of another of the investigative reports — *The Truth About Delhi Violence* — are suing the Indian government and the Delhi Police Commissioner for adequate compensation for the riot victims. Meanwhile Rajiv Gandhi has told the press 'We have done a lot (for the Sikhs); we do not think it will help at the moment (to set up a judicial commission). It will raise issues which really are dead . . . Sikhs who had left are all . . . returning. We have taken steps for their protection and rehabilitation.'

WHAT IS THE nature of this 'protection and rehabilitation'? A visit to Sultanpuri, once a predominantly Sikh area of Delhi, is unforgettable; rows of burnt houses, doorless and roofless, half burnt door frames hanging askew from disjointed hinges and blackened walls bear witness to the horror of the November massacres. Bullet marks are still on the walls of the house where the Granthi (priest) and his son had been taken by the Sultanpuri police in the name of giving them protection and then shot almost at the doorstep. Even after four months the Gurdwara (Sikh temple) is still in shambles and very few houses have been made habitable for the women who were widowed and made homeless in the riots.

As for the 'return' of the Sikhs, the women who had returned to Sultanpuri are among those who after the pogrom had fled to relatives in Alwar in Rajasthan state. Almost immediately after they had arrived, the Rajasthan police started putting pressure on them to return. They were brought back to Delhi by the Delhi police. They then took refuge in the Rakabganj Gurdwara in Central Delhi but were forbidden to remain by Delhi administration officials who told them that their presence was turning the Gurdwara, a tourist attraction, into an eyesore.

In Sultanpuri silent women sit huddled on one side of the lane where their doorsteps might have been, with their uncomprehending children clinging to them. Few have received any compensation. Siyani Bai, aged 75, who lost her 80-year-old husband, her only son, her grandson, her brother and her nephew all burnt alive before her eyes and then had her house looted and set on fire, has received nothing. Nor has Jinta Kaur whose husband was similarly murdered and who is homeless and penniless. She had made a statement to the police and kept a copy but the police have no trace of it.

As night falls fear seizes the women; those who have a safe place to go leave with their children, others sleep 10 or 12 together in one room. The men who destroyed their homes, killed their husbands and raped them — whether old, young or pregnant — are still there hanging around in large groups or gambling by the roadside. The shop-keeper who supplied chemicals and kerosene for the arson attacks is still doing business.

RAJIV GANDHI complacently asserts that Sikhs are returning to their homes yet in fact more than 50,000 Sikhs from all over India have migrated to the state of Punjab, although they are well aware that there too they will have to live in an atmosphere of acute tension and police repression. Youths are missing, fled to Pakistan, gone underground to join the Khalistan movement or else simply disappeared to avoid arrest and imprisonment. Their families face police harassment such as the ploughing up of their crops or the detention of aged parents. The Punjab Armed Police (now to be equipped with more modern weapons) functions as both an army and police — at the same time shooting innocent peasants in so-called 'encounters' with 'extremists' and fabricating charges of possession of illegal arms under the Arms Act.

Meanwhile, as if to spell out its future intention, the government has amended its already draconian National Security Ordinance so that people can now be arrested without warrants and held indefinitely without trial. □

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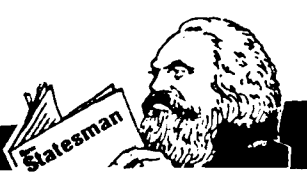

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LETTERS

The right to assess writing

Michèle Barrett, London N7

Both Paul Gilroy and Patricia Dunker (Letters 29 March and 5 April) accuse Francis Mulhern of being 'patronising' about women writers in his assessment of the world of Alice Walker and others (*NS* 22 March). Paul Gilroy wants to vet Mulhern's background reading before allowing him the right to speak about a black novelist; Patricia Dunker thinks that no man could have a legitimate view about women writers in any case. Neither of them really tackles his *argument*, and neither of them shows that he is 'patronising' in his manner. His article could only be regarded as 'patronising' if, by definition, any praise of a black or female author by a white or male critic is seen as illegitimate. In fact, the position underlying both these responses is a straightforward policing of who has the right to speak.

The first aspect of this concerns the politics of experience. What was once a reasonable position in relation to women's and black liberation — that to speak of oppression you had best experience it rather than theorise it from afar — has now become a coercive ban on discussion and analysis. Now, it seems, no man can ever speak of women, no white of blacks, no straight of gays, no carnivore of vegetarians. (The ban operates only one way on the obvious power axes.) Paul Gilroy seems to think that white people should only write about white people, Patricia Dunker that men should only write about men, so presumably Francis can only write about white men. (Though think what would be said if he did.) In practice this amounts to a silencing of certain categories of people, irrespective of what they have to say.

Secondly, Mulhern transgresses the current liberal orthodoxy that no one on the Left should have a view about the quality of cultural work. The reason why both Gilroy and Dunker call him 'patronising' (and Dunker throws in an 'authoritarian' as well), is simply because Mulhern chooses to praise the novels in question as good in literary terms. The 'discussible achievement' that he attributes to feminist writing is not, it seems, discussible in the *New Statesman* anyway. The political insistence that one *only* speaks from experience goes hand in hand with a complete refusal of traditional questions of 'good' and 'bad'.

Yet these discussions go on whether their critics like it or not, and it seems ridiculous to say that they should not go on in print. What is needed is a more politically informed and critical basis for making such judgements, not a public silence that allows most people to go on airing their prejudices in private. Surely Mulhern is right that we need further open discussion of the significance of contemporary novels? Certainly we can do without a form of censorship that, taken to its logical conclusion, means that the only person empowered to speak about Alice Walker is Walker herself.

Colemanballs

Deva Mani, Nottingham

I noted John Coleman's concern, manifested in his 22 and 29 March columns, that his readers be alerted to appearances by blonde actresses in the films he reviews ('blonde Joanne Pearce', 'fur-coated blonde wife', 'blonde pick-up'), and his reference to a woman pop-singer as 'a girl pop-singer' (29 March). I was nonetheless a little surprised to read in his 5 April column of a juvenile audience's 'healthy wolf-whistles when a Lolitan little beauty cropped up as the Empress'. I now realise that your film critic is satirising sexist attitudes in film critics. But if he does so every week, might the joke not wear a bit thin?

On being a Border Liberal

Rt Hon. David Steel MP, House of Commons

The piece on my constituency party (*NS* 29 March), written by Edinburgh City Labour activist Rob Edwards, could be treated as a predictable partisan diatribe were it not so entertainingly ignorant of local government in the Borders.

For starters, it is just laughable to suggest that Councillors Dumble, Grant or Barron 'deliberately concealed their political allegiance' by standing without political label. Councillor Dumble is well known throughout the Borders, but especially in his home town of Galashiels, as my full-time political agent. Councillor Grant is not only my constituency chair, but was for several years before that Chair of the Galashiels branch — which includes his ward. Likewise Councillor Barron is Chair of the Melrose branch — the town which elected him. The idea that the electorate in their respective local wards do not know these men as Liberals is just preposterous. These are not anonymous large city wards but lively small towns with an active local press and a tradition of well-attended public meetings. All of them have chaired my own election meetings.

Second, he can search my constituency for any SDP member who wishes to stand in the local elections on a party ticket. As I explained to him in a telephone interview what they do in the next door constituency is a matter for them. One of the District Councils there is Tory controlled, so the situation *is* different.

In my constituency the District Councils have always been independent and the electorate has not taken kindly to efforts to introduce party labels. Mr Edwards somehow manages to omit the fact that all the Labour candidates in what he describes as the party's 'major campaign' in both Tweeddale and Ettrick and Lauderdale Districts were defeated, and that the only two Labour councillors who exist in the whole of my constituency are among the 11 he despised as returned unopposed.

Your writer glibly uses words like 'Liberal control' of the District Councils when in fact there is scarcely any political content in their decision making. Their only major power is over housing. He seems not to know that the District Councils in the Borders because of their small size do not have the same powers as Edinburgh District. Doubtless there is some socialist revolution which ought to be pursued in the matters of administering local parks, abattoirs, tourism and swimming pools but it has escaped my attention so far.

As for rates policies of central government they have been every bit as vocally opposed as have 'political' councils without flying the red flag from the town halls.

Councillors in the Borders will continue to be elected or defeated on their own personal merits. My constituency is not as he describes a 'rotten borough' but one that has been fought hard for at every election. The task has been somewhat eased by the antics of my local Labour Party who have seen their share of the vote steadily decline from 21 per cent to 7.6 per cent during the eight elections I have contested and whose latest 'success' was failing to get on to the final agenda of the Scottish Labour Party Conference their resolution calling for the resignation of Neil Kinnock. Long may they flourish under Mr Edwards's ludicrous encouragement.

On the buses

John Telford Beasley, Chair, London Buses Ltd

Mick Hamer really does not do justice to his case against conversion to driver-only operation by so badly representing our views in favour of it (*NS* 29 March). His article is full of inaccuracies and misrepresentations.

In 1972 it was decided to move to only 50 per cent driver-only operation: this was achieved in 1978. The programme of conversion came to an end because it had been planned to do so, not as he claims because of any inherent unreliability in driver-only operation. Vehicle reliability was not a factor in the pause in conversions.

Journey times on driver-only buses are about 10 per cent longer. The timetable increase, however, has been only about 14 per cent, not 25 per cent as Mr Hamer asserts. The extra is to compensate for irregularity caused mainly by traffic problems. In general this compensation has been successful and studies have shown no change in regularity after conversion.

The frequency of services is not 'bound to drop' after conversion. Our current policy is to maintain frequency unless there are other separate reasons for change, such as levels of passenger demand.

Mr Hamer quotes the attitude survey from the Transport Studies Unit report in support of his view that driver-only vehicles are unpopular. This survey involved 42 people in six group discussions. Our own research with samples of 2,000 passengers clearly indicates that there is strong resistance to paying higher fares to maintain crew-operation. We are concerned for the safety of our staff. As conductors are four times more at risk than driver-operators, one person operation is clearly superior in terms of security for our staff.

Conversion to driver-only operation does have employment implications. We are only too pleased if conductors seek to retrain as drivers whether they are men or women. Indeed we encourage women to retrain and those who have done so have been highly successful. That only 1 per cent of drivers at present are women reflects not our policy but women's career choices.

Mr Hamer misunderstands our figures relating to the costs and savings arising from conversion. If all our buses could be converted to driver-only operation (which is not current policy, because of practical problems) there would be a direct saving to London Buses of £25 million a year. This would be reflected in lower costs and therefore reduced pressure to increase fares.

Keep in touch . . .

Neath, Dulais & Swansea Valley Miners' Support Group, 14 Maescynog, Ystradgynlais, Swansea

Many thanks to the *New Statesman* and its readers for all your support and involvement in the miners' struggle. Although we did not achieve the victory that we deserved, we are not downhearted as the struggle still goes on.

Our support group is staying together because the community spirit that was developed during the strike is too precious to give up. If at any time you want to keep in contact, you are welcome to do so.

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All in a day's work

They are seen by many of the working class as the police officers of the welfare state with the power to enter their homes and rip their children away; they are seen by the government as the refuse collectors — to work but not be seen — of a society where the family structure is unaccountably breaking down; and they are viewed by the public alternately as do-gooding busybodies and incompetent bureaucrats. When social workers do their job well there is no one to praise them; when they fail, as in the recent case of the death of Jasmine Beckford, they are publicly execrated. MICHAEL COMLEY, a social worker, gives us a glimpse of what social work entails

ONE

Rounding the corner of a residential road I find my colleague struggling with an absconding youth. Sitting on the boy's feet, I observe him sink his teeth into my colleague's calf. At this moment, an elderly woman stops her car and enquires whether we need help. Graciously declining her offer, we return to the struggle and I inform the young man that if he persists in his resistance I shall have no hesitation in knocking his teeth down his throat.

TWO

At 2 o'clock in the morning I follow two policemen dragging a naked man along a corridor of a Victorian psychiatric hospital. The man is facing me, his heels scraping on the tiled floor. As we move towards the ward I find myself idly wondering whether the extreme smallness of his penis has any relation to his mental illness which caused him to destroy all the furniture in his home. Driving home at dawn I watch a single wild goose flying silhouetted against the orange flushed sky.

Henry Iles

THREE

Arriving at the hostel I am informed that my client, a mentally handicapped 20-year-old with an eight-year-old's understanding, has not been told that I am taking him for an operation to remove a damaged toenail at the minor surgery department of the local hospital. The staff had been afraid to tell him in case he reacted violently. During our five-minute journey I struggle to explain and prepare him for the experience. We both don surgical masks and gowns, he clutches my hand, bewildered. Moving towards the theatre his grasp tightens; seeking the operating table he freezes but then relaxes, curious about the array of equipment. Fourteen stone and 5' 10" of child is encouraged to lie on the operating table; soothed with words of encouragement he eventually allows himself to be anaesthetised.

In the recovery room he refuses to wear one shoe and one slipper, insisting on forcing his shoe over the bandages. Blood oozes from his dressing when, back at the hostel, his shoe is removed.

FOUR

I had been told that my new client, suffering from athetoid cerebal palsy, would be sitting in the hall of the hospital, by a radiator. My lengthy journey, complicated by snow, had been physically tiring and no staff were around; the only person in the hall was a woman in a wheelchair sitting by a radiator. I sat beside her and chatted for 20 minutes. She did not respond but I assumed she had a severe speech defect. Feeling frustated, I returned to the office and recounted the experience to my supervisor. His description of her did not tally with mine and I realised that the woman by the radiator could not have been my client.

It was some weeks before I was able to summon up enough courage to pay a second visit.

FIVE

Sitting on a river bank with a 14-year-old boy on a beautiful summer's day, I feel guilty that this cannot be seen as work. Having forgotten to buy bait we are fortunate to have found some casters discarded by a previous fisherman. The boy eventually catches a 'Miller's thumb'

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which we take back to the children's home.

My role is to lie dozing in the sun and then after lunch in a nearby pub to return to 'real' work.

SIX

Mrs Jones, paralysed from the neck downwards by multiple sclerosis, retains honour and an endearing, warm personality. Given a POSSUM machine she is able to open the door, switch on the radio and television, ring an alarm bell and operate the telephone. If I visit on Tuesday I can choose mince pie or apple pie fresh from her sister's oven. We obtain a specially adapted typewriter from the RAF benevolent society on which, activated by sucking and blowing, according to a code which her failing eyes cannot see, at the bottom of the list of weekly shopping which her brother-in-law collects, she types a bawdy verse.

SEVEN

Sitting in the prison waiting room the husband is agitated and made angry by the unexplained delay. Four children between the ages of 18 months and six years are bored, restless and grizzly. The half-hour visit to their mother is strained and stilted. They are made uncomfortable by my and the warders' presence and talk of inconsequential things, virtually ignoring the children's needs. Desultory conversation comes to an end with the warders' terse 'time's up'.

Half way through the two-hour journey home a foul smell permeates the car. The father says nothing because he cannot change a nappy.

I am silent because I want to get them home and escape.

EIGHT

Sitting in the High Court, I count two QCs, four barristers, four solicitors, two juniors, two clerks and a judge. Throughout the four-day hearing, complicated by the local ombudsman's enquiry and a hearing in the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, I represent myself (as social worker to the child), my department and my profession as an expert witness.

I wear my new suit, feeling alone and unsupported in this alien, inquisitorial world.

Confronted with a demand for information which I cannot immediately provide, I rush to a telephone which cannot receive incoming calls. Neither my area director, nor any senior social worker is available in my office. One hour later my secretary and a colleague give me the precise information required which proves my evidence correct, removing any possibility of my work and integrity being censured.

I return to the witness box feeling relieved but angry with a profession which gives me such responsibility without adequate support.

NINE

I hold his left foot, somehow feeling safer at this end of his body. Four police officers and a sergeant hang on to his other flailing limbs. His struggles remain violent and I curse the doctor's lack of satisfactory medication in his Gladstone bag. Dressed only in underpants the patient has been found walking along the road waving an air-rifle. The living room floor is littered with broken glass, the punch, made for his non-existent birthday guests, wet under our feet. Blood streams from his cut ankle and the ambulance men criticise our handling of 'their' patient.

The ambulance reaches speeds of 80 miles per hour on the 20-mile trip to the hospital. I follow in my Volkswagen, frightening myself on every bend.

The police officers joke with the ambulance crew, following his successful admission, and try the gas and air for themselves.

TEN

I had removed her only child, then 22 months old, three months previously. He had been left alone in the flat for many hours at a time, frightened, bewildered and hurt. Noticing brown marks on the now unused cot and the walls of what had been his bedroom, I ask what caused them. She replies unfeelingly, 'It could have been chocolate or it might be from the time he had diarrohea'.

ELEVEN

A 15-year-old boy asks for details of his early life. I explain his mother's inability to care for him as a baby, the series of moves from nursery to foster homes in his first three years and, finally, his experiences in his eventual foster home, where, at five years of age, his wrists were tied together to prevent him stealing food. He remembers an incident when, attempting to avoid a smack, his head came into contact with a bath tap; the scar remains, close to his left eye. He listens to details of the severe bruising which was discovered by the playgroup supervisor. This self-contained and controlled young man breaks down, sobbing uncontrollably, expressing the distress of his five-year-old self. Sharing his anguish I feel that there may now be hope for his future emotional life.

Henry Iles

TWELVE

Wracked by grossly conflicting feelings, I enter a small side ward alongside the labour ward. The woman lying in the bed is still drowsy from having given birth to a healthy daughter. I explain that a court order had been granted on my application, and that her new-born child is subject to a place-of-safety order. She is helped to understand that she cannot remove her child from the hospital, that a foster home will be found and that the courts will eventually decide her future. To my amazement, she shows little reaction.

During the preceding months I had imagined every possible reaction a mother

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might have to the removal of her new-born child. Nothing had prepared me for this near total absence of feeling. With no one to turn to for advice, this being the department's first such action, I had struggled with my feelings and conscience, over-burdened and overwhelmed by the enormity of my potential action. Only the details of the injuries to her previous child sustained me in my decision, my mind continually returning to — six broken ribs, a fractured kneecap and left arm and severe bruising. All this in a four-year-old child habitually sleeping in an outhouse with the family Alsatian.

Three years and three such removals at birth later (including a subsequent son born to the same mother), this first baby I have taken away is adopted, as is her brother. They are happy, secure, loved and protected.

Six years later I read in the local newspaper that the woman had been convicted of causing the death of her Alsatian. During a spell of hot weather, she locked it in a metal tank converted into a cage. Her defence was that the dog was locked away to prevent it attacking local children.

THIRTEEN

The 30-year-old father who had punched his three-month-old child leading to its removal and eventual adoption came into the office drunk. This was in no way unusual, a familiar pattern when lunchtime drinking failed to ease his guilt. In no state to talk, he slumped in a chair, and, after failing to make verbal contact with him, I suggested that he rest for an hour before I took him home. I checked later and found him asleep. At 5 pm, three of us tried to wake him and failed. His pulse was regular, his breathing shallow. An ambulance was called to take him to casualty and I rushed to his home to check on what drugs he might have taken. In the casualty department, he reacts violently to their attempts to help but is admitted for his own safety.

Next morning I learn that he discharged himself immediately on waking. I feel that he cannot be helped but know that I will need to cope with my own guilt feelings, having failed him, when he is eventually found dead.

FOURTEEN

Mr Brown was 84, his wife was 82. Denied the outlets of pub and garden by increasing frailty, he regularly attacked his wife with the poker or his stick causing extensive bruising; the blood showing black beneath her paper-thin and wrinkled skin. Admitted to an old people's home, he rapidly declined; she, admitted later to the same home, visited him as if from her own home. Married for over 60 years they lived in separate units in the home, she afraid of his discovering her whereabouts. He died never suspecting that they had continued to share a roof.

FIFTEEN

Invited to a wedding, I meet up with three brothers now in their mid-20s after a gap of about seven years. Greeted affectionately, I feel a surge of pride in their immaculate appearance and expensively cut hair. They are relaxed in introducing me as their former social worker and we exchange memories of pain and pleasure. I realise that my feelings towards them are reciprocated and am overwhelmed, feeling as if they are my sons.

At the reception I am cocooned in feelings of warmth, acceptance and pleasure. Remembering their years in children's homes, their lack of adult emotional support and the filthy stickiness of what we called their 'home', I marvelled at their ability to make and sustain relationships. Their gentle, affectionate handling of their bizarre parents, he quietly and steadily drinking away, she raucous, downing pints in one gulp and fishing tights and mutton-cloths out of her pockets, amazed me.

Sustained by their warmth and invited to the next wedding, 'first on the list after her mom and dad', I leave feeling that my work is worthwhile, ready to face the continuing challenge of other aggressive, confused and seemingly unfeeling adolescents.

SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES through the agony of making decisions significantly affecting the lives of others, I feel an ever-increasing respect for their humanity and integrity. Knowing that their actions will be mis-read and misunderstood, they confront the issues unflinchingly with dignity and concern for all involved.

I rage inwardly at the insensitivity of slick media reporting of tragedies. The social worker who removes a child is arrogant, draconian, denying parental rights. The social worker who fails to remove a child in time is pilloried, castigated for being ineffective and indecisive. My rage increases with the apparent inability of social work departments or my profession to explain the work, difficulties and constraints affecting the members of an under-valued profession, working in conditions of great and continual stress. I cannot blame the public for failing to understand when I give them no information. I know the world of Jasmine Beckford and the agony of her social worker. Suddenly I remember what is taught by Buddhism: 'That not to cover one's own sins is the same as repentance, so then I begin to tell my sin to the entire company around, whether they be strangers or my old friends'. □

BOOKS

Battle stations

Kai Bird

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STUDS TERKEL *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95

'I WAS DRINKING about a fifth and half of whiskey every day,' says John Garcia of his years as a combat soldier in World War Two. 'Sometimes homemade, sometimes what I could buy. It was the only way I could kill.'

No war is good, as those combat soldiers like Garcia know all too well. But Studs Terkel, that genial American radical, has written a book which will explain why for Americans, and only Americans, this was in some bitter-sweet way a 'good' war. It is his fifth oral history, and many will agree by far his best collection of interviews.

'While the rest of the world came out bruised and scarred and nearly destroyed,' one man tells Terkel, 'we came out with the most unbelievable machinery tools, manpower, money. The war was fun for America. . . World War Two? It's a war I still would go to.'

For Americans it was the last war fought in innocence, the last war that did not end by dividing Americans against one another. It relieved more than a decade of depression poverty. And when it was all over, America was the world power, armed with nuclear weapons and all the usual prerogatives of a wealthy and victorious empire. But, as we have come to know in the 40 years since the defeat of Fascism, somehow, somewhere along the way, we Americans became more scarred by that 'good' war than we thought possible. Those who fought it almost universally long for the simplicity of the pre-war years.

The war laid bare for all to see the terrible inconsistencies of the great American promise of freedom and democracy. We placed more than 100,000 of our own citizens behind barbed wire merely because of their Japanese ancestry. We fought to free Europe from the barbarism of Nazi racism with a segregated army. Many of our soldiers were so brutalised by their combat experiences that they engaged in exactly the kind of war crimes we associated with the enemy, such as summary executions of prisoners-of-war. Hardly any of us questioned the systematic firebombing of cities such as Dresden and Tokyo, a tactic that served no military purpose other than to terrorise defenseless civilian populations. We ended the war by dropping two, not even one, atomic bombs on civilian populations in Japan. And barely was the war in Europe over when we began to hire Nazi war criminals, SS and intelligence officers to collect information on our erstwhile Soviet allies, a people who had sacrificed 20 million dead while we Americans methodically spent nearly three years preparing for an invasion of Nazi Europe where as few of our own soldiers would be put at risk as possible.

These nasty little thoughts are usually very successfully ignored by the American public.

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'Serious' historians do not write about such things without being tarred with the brush of red revisionism, whereupon they promptly sink into oblivion. But Terkel does it and his book has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for months. It is enormously popular and has been warmly praised by reviewers in establishment papers. Why? How does Terkel get away with it, particularly in the Reagan era where the *Commentary*, neo-conservative club of hacks are constantly prowling for Americans who don't 'stand tall'?

Part of the answer lies in that Terkel doesn't write for the professional historian. To begin with, that particular crowd of academics turn their noses up at oral histories. Quite rightly, too. Oral histories became rather faddish a couple of decades ago and all too often consist of highly self-serving reminiscences of elderly statesmen. But Terkel, for the most part, doesn't tape the famous and rich. (And when he does, these interviews are the least interesting.) His simple brilliance lies in getting common people to talk about their experiences. If only because they claim no more than what they personally have seen and felt, these little testimonials are hard to dispute.

Terkel has these people talking about this 'good war' as if they had fought the 'dirty' war in Vietnam. 'We came to Munich with Patton,' says Walter Rosenblum, a US Army combat cameraman.

> There was a firefight between Americans and SS troops in a square... The SS troops surrendered. It was in the back of a courtyard. I sat down on a long bench against the wall. It was like a stage set. They put the Germans against the wall... There were about three or four Americans with tommy submachine guns. They killed all the Germans. Shot 'em all. I filmed the whole sequence... The Germans were quite brave. They sensed what was happening and they just stood there.

Terkel also concentrates on people who have something to say about the origins of the Cold War. Arno Mayer, now a professor at Princeton University, tells how in early 1945 he was assigned to interrogate captured German generals. 'I was to get as much information as I could with regard to only one thing: the battle order of the Red Army. About Germany, not one blessed thing.'

Also interviewed is Erhard Dabringhaus, the American intelligence officer who was Klaus 'The Butcher of Lyon' Barbie's supervisor when the war criminal was helping the Americans to destroy communist influence in France. 'He was informing on French communists. That's what we were looking for from him...We all knew he escaped to Bolivia. It was common knowledge. We gave him all kinds of passports.'

There are already several tomes out on the Barbie case, any one of which reveals more details about this major embarrassment to the US intelligence community. But for many people, Terkel provides the essence of the matter on this and many other issues of the 'good war'.' His is a book that not only informs, but moves people to feel what that 'good' war was really like — and how terrible the next one will be. □

Manhood

Geoff Dyer

Men
ANNA FORD *Weidenfeld* £10.95
The Sexuality of Men
ed. ANDY METCALF and
MARTIN HUMPHRIES *Pluto* £4.50

BEGINNING with the extraordinary claim that so much 'has been written about the lives and attitudes of women and so little about the world of men', Anna Ford goes on to wonder why there is so little 'first-hand information from men themselves'. Oh, there are books and so on, but these are not by ordinary men and it is ordinary 'Englishmen without their layers of camouflage' that she is interested in. Realising that from roughly Desmond Morris onwards the most barely credible enterprise can be decked out in the full solemnity of serious social research, Ford spent three years interviewing over 120 Englishmen in an attempt to find out what they were like. Add up the results, divide by 120 and there you have it — the thing itself: *homo ford.*

Although the interviews were free from axe grinding or thesis (the assumption that there is such a thing as an ordinary man, disguised by layers of camouflage rather than contained in and revealed by them need not be commented on here), the results have been divided into pertinent topics — work, sex, marriage etc. — and framed by Ford's own impressions of what was said. An arrangement of data is inevitable but it is the inviolable rule of oral testimony that people are left to speak for themselves. Ford's method is to summarise a dominant attitude and then quote an informant to illustrate it:

> Terry... can see things from a woman's point of view now he has a baby daughter: 'A daughter will be a lot more worry than a son, because I know what blokes are like, you see, so I'll be a lot more wary when she goes out.'

And that's just about all we get from Terry. Some informants get a couple of pages but generally they're in and out of the witness box before you know what's happened.

At the end of each chapter Ford collates the evidence and offers some conclusions which turn out to be abbreviated re-statements of the initial observations. Such a method makes the reader all but redundant; I found myself reduced to searching out little puns and slips: "Money can't buy it [beauty]; it is a delicious commodity"; "my education is better than what my wife's is..."

The best moment comes when a taxi-driver turns to Ms Ford and says he wouldn't like to be married to her; 'it'd be like having a piranha fish in the pond.' Stylistically, Ford's prose puts one more in mind of a goldfish in a bowl. Sentences are the shortest distance between two platitudes. Sometimes an especially banal phrase is put in inverted commas by way of mitigation but many a weary cliché — 'the whole hog', 'the apple of his eye', 'tip of an emotional iceberg' — is able to make itself

Anna Ford: goldfish or piranha?

inconspicuously at home in the comfort of the text.

The final chapter of Anna Ford's book is concerned with 'the new men', the sort, as one interviewee puts it, 'with Marx in one hand and a scrubbing brush in the other'. Make that Marx, Freud, Lacan and Chodorow as well in the case of the contributors to the fascinating **Sexuality of Men**. The nine articles — on gay machismo, pornography, the media, desire and pregnancy and so on — are less explicitly about men's sexuality than about 'the silence at the heart of men's social relations' created by the lived experience of masculinity. Like the central claim that the aggressive, self-dependent ethos of masculinity betrays a fear of its fragility, most of the discussion (including attacks on the reactionary elements in Dworkin, Brownmiller) has already been made familiar by the women's movement.

The problem in such a book, as one contributor suggests, is a grammatical one: Are men 'we' or 'they'? The third person asserts a conscious and possibly self-congratulatory independence from the masculine ideology that taints the rest of them/us. 'We', as another contributor puts it, can lead to 'generalising from a particular experience without being clear enough about its social and historic specificity.' The combination of anecdote and theory, autobiography and speculation, both resolves and duplicates the problem. Inevitably, some blurring results. To take two examples.

Peter Bradbury writes that 'heterosexual men deny the emotional dimension of their relationships with other men'. Certainly

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heterosexual men do not tend to express affection for their friends physically but to take this to mean that they do not feel (or respond to other men's) warmth is to repeat the reduction of affection to sex so characteristic of the cult of masculinity he is challenging.

Elsewhere, Richard Dyer argues that mainstream narrative and male sexuality go, so to speak, hand in hand. Both keep women in their place. 'It is no accident', he writes, 'that the word climax applies to orgasm and narrative.' To bring things into close proximity is not to argue them through, even if this style of narrative is contrasted, with some emotive word play, with the 'complex frustrations of *film noir* narrative, the unending multiple climaxes of soap opera . . .' Unless *film noir* and soap opera are shown to be specifically feminine narrative forms, the second point simply cancels out the first by showing the variety of male narrative.

Having said that, the contributors are aware, to a man, of dealing with a subject riddled with doubts and contradictions. In the spirit of the book these comments are intended less as criticisms *of* than as responses *to* a thought-provoking collection. □

FICTION

Paradise lost

John Clute

THERE ARE far more first novels in the world than second novels, and most of them seem to be about characters who have become, or who are destined to become, first novelists unlikely to write second novels. After the ordeal of the childhood of the first novelist has been bared to the reader, along with the traumatic departure from the old home and the old city and the first love, there is often a sense that little more can be said, that the smithy of the soul has forged its last and one more life of mute toil is about to begin in London. Of course for some there will be a stint at the BBC.

'Like most people I lived for a long time with my mother and father,' begins Jeanette Winterson's **Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit** (Pandora Press, £4.50), and except for the wry and succinct wit of the utterance we could fairly anticipate yet another doddering traipse through yet another provincial town in the Midlands of this densely populated island. Indeed, about two-thirds of the way through this fitfully brilliant first novel, there are some utterly routine moments when the protagonist reaches early-middle adolescence, discovers her sexual nature, becomes inevitably estranged from her mother and her mother's grotesque fundamentalism, and begins to look to the big city for escape. But enough momentum has been achieved by this point for the reader to breast any wave of ennui.

The heart of the novel lies in the dense, polychromatic clarity of its rendering of the circumstances in which the protagonist and her exorbitant mother pass their days, pixillated, obsessed with a revivalist God and His fallible Pastors, insanely blinkered but joyful. It could all be a painting by L. S. Lowry. But, as with most first novels, Paradise is described as a prelude to the scene of eviction. For Ms Winterson's protagonist, the serpent, not unusually, is sex. She is attracted only to other girls; she is soon sleeping with them. She is exiled from her wacky sect, her family, her home, her city. She is growing up. She could well write a novel. The brisk, glittering, vengeful accuracy of her eye for detail and character and the taut strength of her handling of material suggest that *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* will have successors.

The impossibility of recapturing the past, and the artful dodges of the writer in his exploitation of the materials of his lost life, generate most of the structural pyrotechnics of J. P. Smith's first novel, **The Man from Marseille** (John Murray, £8.95), but the result is skeletal. At 152 pages, it may be that the book is simply too short to give body to its own premises. Alexander Ostroff seems to have been born about 1934 in the south of France to Russian emigré parents engaged in criminal undertakings, perhaps blackmail. They cope with the Nazi invasion, but only at the cost of dubious dealing with the Gestapo and the betrayal of their employee, Felix Dumont. Alexander ends up in England after the war, where he makes his way in literary circles, does a stint at the BBC, begins to fabricate romantic stories for profit about his obscure childhood.

As the novel opens, he is confronted with the aged Felix, and jolted into writing the novel we are reading, which he expects to publish under a pseudonym, perhaps some anonymous name like Smith. But the zigzags of the telling of his story are complicated rather than complex, and fatally sketchy. The tale comes to an exhausted halt at just the point where it might well have taken off; it is to be hoped that Mr Smith will soon recharge his batteries, give us a second book.

If she could have written a novel about the prison of her life, the protagonist of Barbara Hanrahan's new novel, **Annie Magdalene** (Chatto, £8.95), would have written precisely the book she stars in. Narrated in the first person in short sentences that build into 36 short chapters, the novel tells Annie's story from her birth in 1908 in South Africa to the present. Her parents soon emigrate to Adelaide, Australia. She gets a little education. She goes out to work, becoming a seamstress. The years pass; sights, sounds, smells, brand names, outings, deaths, relatives and pets fill her days. She is never tempted to marry. She remains a virgin. Perhaps because she simply does not recognise them, her mild lesbian inclinations go undeveloped. She is one of those whose 'infinitely obscure lives remain to be recorded', as Virginia Woolf puts it in the epigraph to the book.

Hanrahan's assumption of Annie Magdalene's voice is of course an act of ventriloquism, and cannot fail to affect the reader as coming perilously close to condescension, because Hanrahan knows, and her readers know, quite a bit more about Annie than Annie herself could hope to find words for. Her unconscious lesbianism is only one example, in this book which, if she were a real person, she could not have dreamt of writing. All the same, despite the disingenuousness of the proceeding, the final pages, though studied, are quietly effective, almost chastely uplifting.

Nicolas Freeling never seems to have written a first novel; as with most successful genre writers, his first Van der Valk policier, *Love in Amsterdam* (1962), comes full-fledged, objective, professional and impersonal into the marketplace. Twenty-three novels later, in **A City Solitary** (Heinemann, £8.50), we find ourselves in the presence of a far more subjective tale of crime. A middle-aged writer, whose background and present circumstances curiously resemble those of Freeling himself, is robbed in his country home in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The event causes him to reflect on his life, his marriage, the death of chivalry, the desecration of old Europe. Through a complication of circumstances, the rendering of which Freeling rather loafs through, he and his wife are re-entangled with the young thug who robbed him. The climax has the melancholic finality of the very best genre climaxes; the self-revelatory brooding infuses the storyline with the raw, ominous subjectivity that a grown person may emit, when stripped bare. □

Awakening

Alan Dixon

You could have lolled in your chair all night
Sleeping and letting your coffee go cold,
Lifting your head each time it rolled,
But I put down my book and snapped the box tight
On my specs. You awoke. You mumbled and frowned
As I started to gather and put things away
For another tomorrow time said was today.
It would be too mean to tread off with no sound
And leave you to sleep till the stormcock at dawn
Shoots through the window its whistle of scorn.

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Shorter reviews

Orwell: The War Broadcasts
ed. W. J. WEST *Duckworth/BBC* £12.95

Rule One when scraping the barrel — never admit it. Witness how W. J. West presents these recently-exhumed scripts and letters written by Orwell while working as a producer with the BBC's Indian Section between 1941 and 1943. It's decidedly unremarkable material: features and short talks, mostly on literary subjects, that pale in comparison with Orwell's journalism; passable adaptations of other writers' stories as radio plays; routine correspondence with potential contributors to forthcoming programmes. West's long introduction, though, largely ignores the issue of quality. He is more concerned with arguing that, *pace* conventional wisdom, the key to Orwell's 'evolution' from the minor novelist of pre-war days to the creator of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* lies in those BBC years. The implication seems to be that the ensuing Orwelliana provide supporting evidence.

In fact, West draws on just a few items and grossly exaggerates their significance. Among the adaptations, for instance, is one of Silone's stories 'The Fox'. This realistic story — which briefly features a pig whose anti-fascist owner names it 'Mussolini' — may well have prompted Orwell to make pigs the revolutionary leaders in *Animal Farm*. West, though, claims that it sparked off the whole novel. In similar fashion, he portrays Basic English and J. F. Horrabin's geopolitical theories — Orwell commissioned talks on both — as the paramount sources of the Newspeak and the super-powers of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, overlooking Orwell's preoccupation with the debasement of language and understating the prior influence of James Burnham's ideas. Several other of the novel's crucial aspects are traced, dubiously, to Orwell's experiences — notably his dealings with the Ministry of Information's censorship department — as a BBC employee. Here, one suggestion stands out: that Big Brother was based not on Stalin or Hitler but on Brendan Bracken, the wartime Minister of Information. This gem of pure dottiness is the most flagrant of West's many failures to observe Rule Two — be plausible.

David Montrose

Extra (ordinary) People
JOANNA RUSS *The Women's Press* £1.95

If Joanna Russ did not exist. . . . SF and committed women's writing alike often need to be tempered by her brand of bracing, humane irony, an irony which applies itself not only to traditional sexual roles but to political piety and the act of storytelling. Here, then, are five clever short fictions, cobbled together with a transparently factitious linking rationale, which may have originated as a capitulation to market demands but has ended as an elegant sarcasm, a disposable piece of packaging. A smart brutal Viking leader gets walked all over by a perceptive and articulate abbess; a telepathic cardsharp on a 19th-century clipper ship plays elegant mindgames with a sexually inquisitive doctor; two 20th-century writers resurrected in the far future come against probability to put up with each other's company.

A final epistolary story in which a contemporary feminist tries, as an exercise in politics and wit, to construct a politically correct (and lesbian) commercial gothic blows the gaff on what unites these stories: for Russ, storytelling is a necessary human activity, but not one about which one should get pious. These are useful constructions, not realities, and she refuses to hide all of the joins in the scenery, all of the puppets' strings. Her researched pasts and imagined futures are always solidly visualised, verbally precise; and in quotation marks. Her narrators have their own tone of voice; but her feisty good sense is always there as a counterpoint. This refusal to allow masquerades to be total paradoxically makes us trust the emotional insights she has on offer, truths about survival strategies and self-deception.

The Women's Press has also reissued, as part of its new SF list, her earlier, angrier, more stylistically radical polemic/novel/confession of irritation with males, *The Female Man* (£1.95). Other titles in the SF list are *The Wanderground* by Sally Gearheart (£1.95), a set of virtuous, mimsy fables about a conflict-free, ecologically-sound women's utopia and *The Planet Dweller* by Jane Palmer (£1.95), a jolly romp about saving the world.

Roz Kaveney

The Last Rising: The Newport Insurrection of 1839
DAVID JONES *Oxford* £12.50

Early in the morning of 4 November 1839 soldiers shot and killed some 20 Chartists and wounded many more outside the Westgate Hotel in Newport. Even today the Hotel stands pockmarked by what little fire the Chartists were able to return — a monument to slaughter worse than Peterloo. In the rising's aftermath over 200 Chartists were arrested and 14 men, marked out as leaders, were charged with high treason. Three of them, John Frost, Zepaniah Williams and William Jones, were sentenced to death. Reprieved on a technicality they were all transported for life. In 1856 they received pardons. Only Frost returned to his beloved Wales. Williams and Jones both died in Australia.

The outline story of the Newport Rising has long been well known both to historians and to the Welsh people who kept its heroes and martyrs alive in popular memory. However, this new book transforms our knowledge not only of the actual rising but also of its background. David Jones is an outstanding member of the new generation of Welsh historians and his earlier work on preindustrial Wales feeds naturally into the Newport rising. Those first generation proletarians who died in the streets of Newport were transitional figures, still partly fixed in older ways of organisation and protest as well as looking forward to the economic and political radicalism of later generations.

In a short review it is very difficult to do this book justice. Its central argument, that the rising was a serious attempt to change the social order, albeit based on a confused social vision is vital to our understanding of Chartism in Wales and elsewhere. Our knowledge of the Eastern edge of South Wales in this period has been added to enormously. Above all it is a marvellously written account of one of the most important chapters in the history of the Welsh and the British working class.

Alun Howkins

The Firewalkers
FRANCIS KING *GMP* £9.95 & £3.95

The Firewalkers was first published in 1956 under the pseudonym 'Frank Cauldwell' after the British Council had given Francis King the choice of publishing it under his own name or remaining in their employ. This autobiographical novel describes the young narrator's encounters with Greece and with elderly eccentric Colonel Grecos. At the centre of the book, touchingly described, is the platonic but devoted relationship between Grecos and another misfit, the staggeringly ugly German youth Götz.

In his new introduction Francis King describes the 'exhilarating sense of liberation' he experienced as a 'prim young man' setting foot in Athens. *The Firewalkers* is very much a young man's novel, but, despite his liberation, a young man who remains rather serious. Grecos is an absurd as well as a magnanimous figure and King's affection for him blunts the humorous edge of the writing, which can hover a little uneasily between irony and sentiment. Nevertheless, the social and diplomatic community in Athens gives King scope for some nicely judged vignettes and he finds a welcome sharpness in his observation of Cedric, the rich, promiscuous and queeny expatriate Englishman.

The Gay Modern Classics series has provided some welcome re-issues, but the danger in labelling a book like *The Firewalkers* a 'gay classic' is that it will be judged in the wrong way, *as a gay novel*. It is not. Homosexuality is certainly treated in the novel — and in a refreshingly unselfconscious way — but it is by no means the book's subject or even a major part of it. To read it as a gay book is to misjudge it from the start. That said, it is pleasant to have *The Firewalkers* in print again, especially as it appears under the author's real name for the first time.

Stephen Everson

The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection
FRANCIS BARKER *Methuen* £8.95 & £4.50

This book is primarily a rhetorical double-act. It is an attempt by an Englishman to be two Frenchmen at once. On the one hand, Francis Barker redescribes Michel Foucault's notion of the redefinition of the human *gestalt* in the mid-17th century and, on the other, he adopts the libertarian posture of the later Roland Barthes, so that the book constitutes a loosely connected series of suggestive essays. The centres of focus are *Hamlet*, Milton's *Aeropagitica*, Descartes, Marvell, Rembrandt and Pepys's *Diary*.

Without doubt, Barker's subject matter is important. His insights into the obsession with the figure of the body in *Hamlet*, and the mediation of this through complex perspectives, bear consideration. The same goes for his exposition of punitive censorship, while there is an interesting account of Pepys's inability to confess the sexual openly. Descartes's manipulation of the reader is also skilfully demonstrated.

However, the book as a whole is too condensed to be convincing. The vocabulary is often obscure, making it hard to read, and pretentious. This is instanced in the jargon of 'subjection': 'terrible' and 'furtive' are recurrent keywords which are imposed upon as opposed to arising out of the material which Barker analyses. Foucault's shortcomings are also recommitted, such as the inadequate account of the relationship between discourse and social reality. The word 'bourgeois' is repeated so many times without context that it becomes meaningless. The importance of the mediation of different genres is largely missed. Barker argues about the presence of the body in Jacobean drama but he registers the 'confinement of the body' in philosophy, diary, poetry and painting. Though who would deny a certain eruption of the body on the Restoration stage?

There are those who will find this book stimulating and provocative, but I fear it may confuse rather than illuminate.

Nigel Smith

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ART

Tables turned

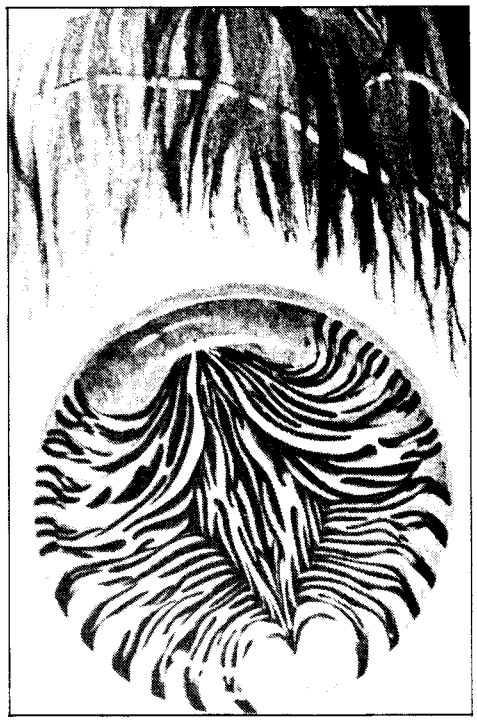
Jules Lubbock

> WOMEN IN general don't care for the arts, and they possess neither good judgement or genius. They succeed only in little things which call for lightness of touch, taste and gracefulness. That divine fire which stirs and inflames the soul, that sublime ecstasy which shakes the very foundations of one's being are always lacking in women's writing, which is as cold and pretty as women are themselves: they have as much wit as you please, but no souls.

Worse still, according to this writer, male artists have emasculated themselves by creating for women the kind of art women ought to make for men — delicate, lighthearted, dainty things to revive the spirits after a hard day's work. In addition, women through their patronage of the arts have come to exercise the power that should be restricted to their lovers over the nation as a whole: the natural order has been reversed and all martial and civic virtues are destroyed.

There hangs in the Wallace Collection a painting of a bullock sitting placidly in a field allowing his horns and shoulders to be garlanded with daisies by six teenage girls, one of whom is lying on his back with her arm around his neck. The subject is 'Europa Eloping', the bullock is Jupiter in one of his many disguises and the artist is Boucher whose paintings of pretty young men typify the effeminacy of which his society stands accused by our critic, a society in which women like Mme de Pompadour indeed exercised great power, especially through the arts.

The critic was Rousseau, the prophet of revolutionary liberty whose views were shared by other Enlightenment philosophers – Diderot in particular. Neither lived to see the 'sublime' and manly art for which they prepared the way. David's 'Brutus', exhibited in 1789, shows the hero who had driven the Tarquin monarchy from Rome and established the Republic seated in the shadows of his house with his back turned sternly upon the funeral cortege of his two sons, whom he had himself sentenced to death for conspiring against the state. In contrast the women of his household, who have just laid down their sewing, are hysterical with grief.



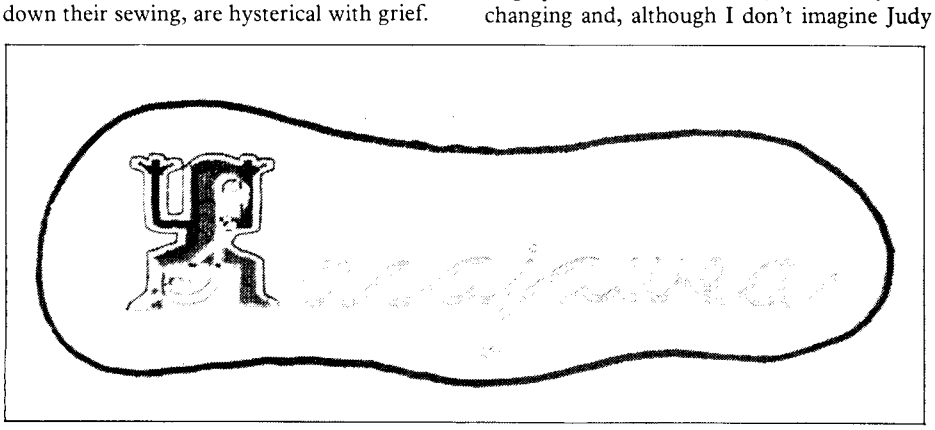
17th-century American midwife and preacher Anne Hutchinson is commemorated in a traditional mourning picture with a willow tree weeping over her plate

The anti-feminist aesthetic of this austere republican art is that to which successive socialist and liberal-bourgeois movements have adhered, and it is the very foundation of the Modern Style in architecture and design. Structural honesty and classical simplicity have come to be associated with equality, democracy, of course, fraternity. Both the practice and the patronage of architecture have been regarded as man's work, concerned as it is with town-planning and hence with government. Women have been banished to the garden and to the interior of buildings, and then only to sitting rooms and bedrooms, where they may weave garlands to their hearts' content without endangering the state. And even interior decoration itself has been subjected to precepts which would reduce the luxuriance of natural motifs to flat, abstract, geometrical patterns in dull colours.

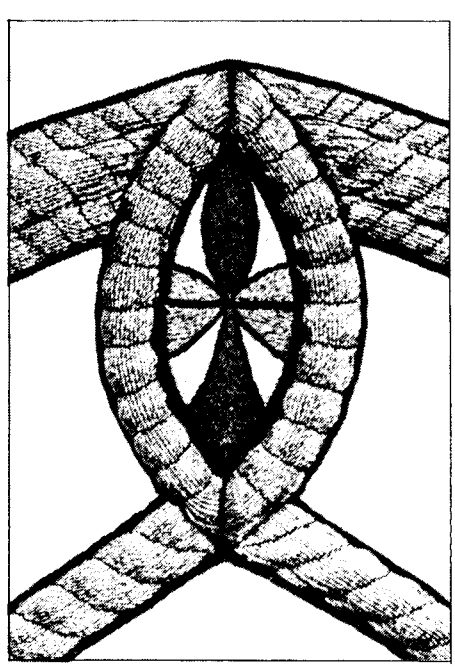
So persuasive was Rousseau's identification of rococo luxury with decadence and despotism that the underlying sexual politics have passed largely unnoticed. Times, however, are changing and, although I don't imagine Judy Chicago would thank me for calling her **Dinner Party** (39-41 White Lion St., Islington, till 26 May) rococo in spirit, the power with which she has employed the so-called feminine arts of ceramic painting and needlework certainly questions modernist principles and points the way to a new architecture.

For, although the main components are 39 painted dinner plates and embroidered runners adorned with emblems of 39 goddesses and great women throughout history, the effect is architectural. Down a dark vaginal corridor hung with soft woollen tapestries woven with an incantation to the Mother of All Things one enters a dark chamber where the great triangular table is set upon a floor of opalescent tiles. Each plate is adorned with a vulva — the idea is crude enough, but through a series of subtle metamorphoses, layers of symbol and leitmotifs of colour, each one characterises a different aspect of woman. There is the fertility of Ishtar bursting with ripe golden figs, the rainbow of Sappho's delicate petals, the flame of St Bridget's charity and the Byzantine mosaic of the Empress Theodora's strong thighs set against the holy fire of a halo of gold embroidery. Each runner complements the plate not only through its symbolism but also by virtue of the needlework employed. The plate of Trotula, pre-eminent of the many women doctors at the University of Salerno in the 11th century, suggests the physiology of reproduction in which she was a specialist, while the runner represents the Tree of Life in a soft quilting technique of the period.

The polemical point underlying this City of Women is based upon the paradox that a cumulative experience as awe-inspiring as that of a great cathedral can be constructed using crafts and materials traditionally associated with feminine weakness and fragility. I would also like to hope that it helps to lay the ghost of Rousseau's idea that all adornment is politically reactionary. □



Sacajawea, 'Bird Woman', Shoshone interpreter and guide at the beginning of the 19th century, is named in beadwork and embroidery on deerskin



Detail from the runner for Hildegarde of Bingen with raised gold-work characteristic of medieval embroidery and a stained glass motif

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FILMS

In the cathouse

John Coleman

A Very Moral Night (15)
The Berkeley at the Classic, Tottenham Court Road
Broken Mirrors (18)
Electric Screen; Screen on the Green; Cinecenta
Micki + Maude (PG)
Leicester Square Theatre
Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano
Nikita Mikhalkov at the NFT, to 29 April
The Return of Captain Invincible (PG)
Minema
In the Name of the People
Rio, Dalston
Leila and the Wolves
Gate, Notting Hill

COMPARED WITH the magnificent *Love* (1970) and his more recent *Another Way* (1982), which was widely reckoned for its bravery in exploring a lesbian affair between an intransigent young journalist and her married colleague, the Hungarian director Karoly Makk's **A Very Moral Night** is a slight and safe entertainment for all that its setting is a brothel. Like many of his colleagues, Makk has often warily shifted the subject-matter of his films back in time: *Love* took place in the Budapest of 1953, *Another Way* was located in 1958. The 'new' movie, made in 1977, is ravishingly period, small-town and — to judge from the high-buttoned clothes — early this century. Kelepey, respectfully called 'Doctor' by the brothel's inmates, actually an indigent and dissolute student living off money despatched by his village mama, has a charm not too readily apparent to the spectator but swampingly sufficient for one of the whores, delicious Darinka, to write a 'Dear Istvan' letter to her fiancé and for the madam herself to offer him board and lodging.

Elegantly mounted and shot, with the bordello an enticing affair of shuttered rooms opening on a courtyard and staffed by a picturesque hunchback piano-player and beautiful golden-hearted whores, the piece is a nostalgically upholstered anecdote (it originated in a short story) given its twist by the unexpected arrival of Kelepey's elderly, innocent but country-wise widowed mother (Margit Makay). During a hectic day and night the pretence is maintained that the brothel's a sedate boarding-house, local dignitaries hastily button lips and flies, to be introduced to unsuspecting Mrs Kelepey; the old woman at last departs, but not before dispensing folk comfort to a suicidal tart. Makk conducts the fairly roseate revels with panache, exploiting their pleasant possibilities for innuendo ('When is bedtime?' asks Mrs K.), giving us a cut-throat card-game at a neighbouring tavern as bonus.

After her controversial debut with *A Question of Silence* a couple of years ago, the Dutch feminist writer-director Marleen Gorris approaches sanity with **Broken Mirrors**, which intercuts bleached sequences of a male sadist snapping Polaroids of a housewife he has kidnapped and chained to a bed in a bleak cell with the garish squalor of life at the Club Happy House as experienced by a mixed group of good-looking tarts. Clearly Ms Gorris has found the perfect objective correlative for her loathing of men (the only sympathetic male is a maundering old Bible-puncher, spouting unseen from a shed) and of their ruthless using of women; and she spares us none of the sordid details as a cleaner makes her rounds amid used condoms, bloody sheets and vomit. As cynical self-appointed spokesperson for the whores, Dora (Henriette Tol) is bitterly funny; the 'girls' are thoughtfully assorted and their working spats and friendships ring true; that sadist — his victim dead — puts in an unwise late appearance at the Club being wielded by Ms Gorris. I caught the show with an all-male audience which stayed peacefully seated throughout: what the moral of *that* is I have no idea.

Micki + Maude — the title as it appears on the screen — is another minus from Blake Edwards, too crude to be redeemed by a handful of smart lines or the cuddle-up appeal of Dudley Moore as Rob, a Californian TV reporter who gets lawyer-wife Micki (Ann Reinking) and cellist-mistress Maude (Amy Irving) pregnant at about the same time. Little Rob scurries between two households down to a double accouchement in adjoining clinic rooms, some tears after bedtime as the women chum up and round on him, poor wee lover, and a farcical happy ending to make Ms Gorris turn in her gravity and even old unreconstructed me want to spit.

Nikita Mikhalkov's 1976 **Unfinished Piece for Mechanical Piano** (15-19 April), a richly textured and superlatively played version of Chekhov's first and incomplete theatrical essay, *Platonov*, is sheer delight, as the mercurial, ineffectual, merry-miserable motley crew gather, play games, bicker, separate and re-group during a day and night in the rooms and grounds of a country house. Mikhalkov started as an actor (appearing here as drunken Dr Triletsky) and has built up a formidable repertory of regulars, with Alexander Kaliagin as the schoolmaster Platonov at crisis-point, Elena Solovei very fine as his put-upon wife and Oleg Tabakov a beastly, blustering Shcherbuk. Also not to be missed in this comprehensive little season is a masterly compression of Goncharov's classic, **Oblomov** (19 April), with Shcherbuk supreme as the slumped monument to lethargy.

Philippe Mora's Australian **The Return of Captain Invincible** stars Alan Arkin as alcoholic 'Vince' brought back to rescue civilisation from Christopher Lee's fine, baritone Mr Midnight. Nice use of old newsreels, authentic and spoof; Arkin in top form, re-learning to fly, etc; some dumpable songs. Frank Christopher's 75-minute documentary, **In the Name of the People**, narrated by Martin Sheen, is a first-rate account of life among the guerrillas of El Salvador: lucid, on-the-spot reporting. For details of three more Latin American films on view this month, contact The Other Cinema (01-734 8508/9). The well-meant **Leila and the Wolves** is a mess, devaluing its archive material with staged and arty footage about 'the collective memory of Arab women and their hidden role in the recent history of Palestine and Lebanon', nipping confusingly around in time and place. □

THEATRE

Mind you

Benedict Nightingale

Jumpers
TOM STOPPARD *Aldwych*

WHATEVER ITS OWN limitations, and those of its present revival, *Jumpers* still seems a pretty stunning contribution to what its author once called the theatre of audacity. After all, how does it begin, how continue? A chanteuse breaks down as she launches into 'Shine on Harvest Moon', then a stripper swings across the stage on a trapeze, then there are dogged acrobatics by yellow-suited gymnasts, one of whom is shot dead as he slots into a human pyramid. That's followed by dauntingly long and dauntingly funny speeches about philosophic issues, verbal games, farcical misunderstandings, the appearance of a spoof detective, puns galore, much witty repartee and, in the world beyond the university in which the action is set, what appears to be a coup d'état; and a dream-sequence brings it all to a suitably grotesque end.

The 1970s produced no more brilliantly inventive a British play — but is its brilliance a kind that illumines the 1980s? On the face of it, that's more questionable. The party that has just swept to power at the polls, or maybe with the help of its fighter-planes, calls itself the Radical-Liberals and, insofar as its policies are apparent at all, seems bent on creating a sleek technocratic paradise with no room in it for the old values, whether these are represented by property-company tycoons or by the God-fearing. Indeed, one of its main aims is to 'rationalise' the Church of England, by which it appears to mean converting its buildings to good social uses, appointing as Archbishop of Canterbury a prominent agnostic and providing him with 'chaplains in belted raincoats'. That doesn't altogether sound like the England of 1985, now does it? The property speculators and their fellow-profiteers are doing rather better than those unscrupulous Rad-Libs, whoever those were, are and might be. And the Church these days seems quite content to rid itself of metaphysics without any leftish tyranny having to compel it.

But maybe that's to miss the point somewhat. *Jumpers* could, I suppose, be seen partly as a right-wing dramatist's travesty of socialist aspirations, but it's more importantly the attack of a moral traditionalist on habits of thinking that seem to him increasingly pragmatic, expedient. It's less about the amorality of one party grouping than that of modern politics, and less about the amorality of modern politics than that of modern philosophy. Why, for instance, should we hesitate to kill one another? Not because it's inherently wrong but because

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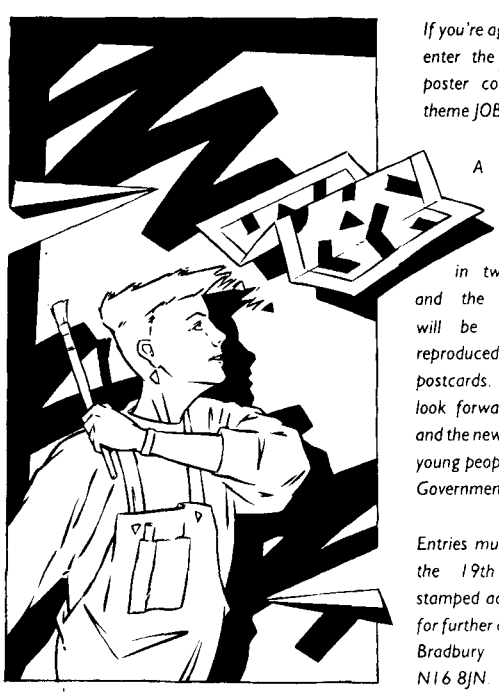

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the LABOUR party

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it's anti-social. There are prohibitions against murder for the same reasons there are rules in tennis, because, without them, group living and Wimbledon fortnight would be a shambles. 'What sort of philosophy is that?' asks Stoppard's spoof detective in an amazement that we, too, are invited to feel. 'Mainstream' comes back the answer. 'Orthodox mainstream.'

Gradually, it becomes clear what characters are to be identified with which attitudes. The gymnasts, or jumpers, are 'logical positivists mainly, with a linguistic analyst or two, a couple of Benthamite utilitarians, lapsed Kantians and empiricists generally, and of course behaviourists'; and their acrobatics represent the ingenious but sterile contortions of their respective systems. The murder-victim, the cause for the detective's blundering presence, is the university's Professor of Logic, whose offence may and may not have been that he's lost his faith in reason and belatedly discovered one in God, deciding that life in a monastery might be better for him than 'giving philosophical respectability to a new pragmatism in public life'. The chanteuse has been much afflicted, indeed propelled towards nervous breakdown, by the landing of men on the moon. From their perspective, planet earth looked 'little, local' and so, of course, did its ethical pretensions.

Here, too, the play may show its age. If it was a bit eccentric 13 years ago to suggest that Neil Armstrong was a sort of updated Copernicus, demonstrating that we could no longer see ourselves as the centre of God's universe, it seems trebly odd to give lunar travel that kind of significance now that we're long over its first astonishment. Yet one mis-emphasis, if that's what it is, doesn't lessen the interest of Stoppard's argument. Still less does it dash the educated amusement to be had from listening to the figure principally entrusted with pushing along that argument: George Moore (not *the* George Moore, just *a* George Moore), Professor of Moral Philosophy at this university of acrobat-logicians, a lone spokesman for ethical absolutism among all that flailing relativity.

Michael Hordern played the role both in 1972 and in the National's revival of *Jumpers* three years later, and he made it indisputably his own. Could anyone who saw him forget his frazzled, flummoxed Moore, shedding dandruff and unhappily bleating as he scratched and worried his way to a distinction between the respective meanings of the Good Samaritan and a good bacon sandwich? Paul Eddington has his earnest and pained moments, but lacks the ability to look as if he's about to fall woefully apart, and so proves a less than satisfactory substitute. Felicity Kendal stands comparison with both Diana Rigg and her successor Julie Covington, finding more vulnerability if less charisma than either did in the part of his wife, the moon-struck singer; but Andrew Sachs is far too frail a presence for the plodding and pedantic sentimentalist, detective Bones. Actually, Peter Wood's production seemed lacking in both energy and precision on its second night, some performers muzzying or even muffing the occasional decent line. It's no good, for instance, riposting to the claim that Edinburgh is 'The Athens of the north' by calling it 'the Reykjavik of the north': the joke is 'Reykjavik of the south'.

Still, there's much, very much to be enjoyed, and enjoyed even by those who resist the tentative conclusions of what Stoppard himself called his 'bathtub philosophy'. Humanists will obviously reject the implication that morality depends on religious belief. Yet won't they find it refreshing to hear subjects of such size and moment being discussed in the theatre? Won't they relish the play's imaginative bravado, its extravagant exuberance? And won't the hardest of them see just a little of themselves in the flounderings of the main character — that mournful yet defiant figure, helplessly yet hopefully peering into the inscrutable universe beyond the bleak and brutal world immediately around? □

MUSIC

Of a piece

Andrew Clements

AFTER SUCH A concentrated dose of Stockhausen earlier this year, Boulez's sixtieth birthday last month came at an opportune time. For, however impressive Stockhausen's compositions may seem, however boundlessly fertile his imagination, it is to Boulez one turns for reassurance about the continuity of tradition in 20th-century music.

Where Stockhausen has in many ways stepped aside from the responsibility of preserving an inherited language, Boulez has worked hard to maintain it, at the expense of his own output — few composers have occupied positions of such respect and influence in their age on the basis of such a slender body of works. There are no stylistic sea changes to be found in his music, nothing in any work which cannot be related back in some way or other to earlier Boulez. So, though the catalogue of completed pieces is so small and could grow smaller still if the composer chooses to withdraw anything else for revision, it makes a thoroughly cogent and satisfying oeuvre.

Among the healthy scattering of broadcast events celebrating his birthday — a BBC Invitation Concert at Maida Vale, a *South Bank* appearance with the BBC Symphony, programmes in the Radio 3 *Music in Our Time* series — by far the most fascinating for me at least was the documentary by Barrie Gavin repeated last week on BBC-2, and built around Boulez's most recent project *Répons*, which was first heard in this country at the 1982 Proms. I managed to miss the programme first time round, but it seems now as relevant as ever, with a lucid introduction to Boulez's career which manages to be simple without being simplistic, extracts from the work itself and the composer in interview, talking more freely about his career and creative processes than I've ever heard before. *Répons* remains the critical test of Boulez's more recent career, not just as the first creative fruit of his own work with the computer facilities at IRCAM, but also as the only large-scale piece he has written since drastically reducing the scale of his conducting engagements to concentrate on running the research centre and on composition.

Like so many of its antecedents *Répons* has proved to be a work-in-progress; the latest version, substantially developed from what we heard in 1982, was unveiled in Paris last autumn, and even now Boulez will not confirm that it has reached a definitive state. Its characteristics are well defined, however; short of total withdrawal, the flavour is unlikely to change radically in any subsequent reworkings or expansions and what the TV programme brought home most successfully was how cunningly Boulez has fashioned his electronic hardware to match his own compositional style.

Where an earlier piece like *Eclat* was expanded into the far more elaborate *Eclat/Multiples* a few years after it was first written in the 1960s, *Répons* allows Boulez to carry out the expansion process before our ears, using his real-time computer techniques to set up the hugely complicated textures that glitter and glint as they slowly die away, to graft on to the sustained resonances of a piece like *Eclat* both the call-and-response structure of something like the memorial *Rituel* (fast becoming his most performed orchestral work) and the fugitive textures of a work as far removed in time from it as *Pli selon Pli*. Other composers have been content to adapt their own musical languages to suit the computer, or used the computer only to create sound complexes that can be perpetuated on tape and introduced as pre-existing material into an otherwise conventionally conceived composition. Boulez has made the technology come to him, fashioned it not only to suit his own compositional intentions, but also to mirror the fine structure of his language so that it operates like an extension of his own creativity.

Of course Boulez has been singularly privileged. IRCAM was set up and shaped by him, with relatively lavish financial support from the French government; in that respect he has enjoyed better working conditions than almost any of his contemporaries. Watching Boulez rehearsing *Répons* on the film, it seemed that this might well become the quintessential example of the open-ended nature of his art — a work which can be performed only by a highly trained team of specialists, in which computer operators have as important a role to play as the instrumentalists; a musical structure which can be articulated by the conductor, which can be constantly updated as new technology becomes available and which will always require a vast range of expensive electronics for its realisation. Mallarmé has always had a crucial influence on Boulez's thought and working methods, and in *Répons* he may just have created the musical equivalent of *Le Livre*, the work which the poet conceived but never realised, and whose creation occupied him for the last years of his life. *Répons* could quite easily dominate Boulez for years to come, constantly changing its outline, growing in scale if not technique. One hopes it won't; there are at least two other projects long announced that sound too good to lose. One is a piece for the soprano Jessye Norman, the other, astonishingly, is an opera, perhaps in collaboration with Genet. Messiaen produced his first opera in his seventies; Boulez could easily be the same age when he finishes his. □

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Richard Willson

Food for thought

Harriett Gilbert

A FRIEND HAS INVITED you to dinner. Having removed the soup plates, they announce that the second course will be something special: expensive, they hint; quite hard to get hold of; chosen especially for you. The lid of the Habitat dish is removed — to reveal the skin-crackling, fat-streaming body of a two-and-a-half-year-old child, its nostrils stuffed with sprigs of continental parsley.

You might feel inclined to puke. You might — if more liberal, rational and cool — feel a need for ethical discourse. But what I think you're *un*likely to do is smile and say, 'How wonderful. Just a little bit please.' I, however, have done just that. Ethics and politics paralysed by a potent mixture of social pressure and my own psychological conditioning, I've eaten (no less immorally for me) the corpses of ducklings, chickens, calves: sentient beings butchered, probably after imprisonment and torture, for no sounder reasons than human conservatism, status-seeking and greed.

I should make it clear that I'm not attempting to convert the committed or indifferent omnivore. More prosaically, I'm trying to examine why many of us who've been troubled by accounts of factory farming and slaughterhouses, who actually know how meat is produced and to what little human advantage, can still make such petty compromises as 'cutting down' on meat; or, in my case, take seven years completely to abandon mammal and bird flesh — and still, when the social going gets tough, eat the occasional fish.

We may just be frivolous hypocrites, of course. Equally of course, I don't think so. The reason we rarely eat each other, after all, isn't because we suspect it may be wrong, but because we've been taught that, worse than wrong, it's disgusting, anti-social and unnatural (*pace* cannibal societies). From the other direction, we've never been taught to associate a plump, cooked person with happiness, security and love both given and received.

Plump, cooked animals, however, mean precisely that; in the face of which, the surprising thing is that there are approximately 1.1 million vegetarians in Britain. There are also one million people who won't eat 'red' flesh and 19 million (one in three of us) who've reduced their consumption of meat in the last 15 years*. The motives, especially of the last two groups, may be various — ethical, medical, economic, stylistic, a mixture of the lot — but, as Maureen Duffy says in *Men and Beasts* (Paladin), 'Any drop in the number of animals killed is worth having, not for our sake but for theirs.'

And this, perhaps, should be borne in mind by any erratic, imperfect, confused or tentative vegetarian. Even the partial shift in diet illustrated by the figures above has had its effect on the meat trade: in a recent *Meat Trades Journal*, there were anxious suggestions that 'slaughterhouse' and 'butcher' be replaced by euphemistic synonyms, while the butchers themselves, it was mooted, might profitably switch to red aprons — so that the blood wouldn't show.

It is also helpful for those attempting to eliminate meat from their diet to think, not in terms of martyred deprivation, but of pleasure. Instead of regretting the Sunday joint, concentrate on the very real pleasures of fresh tagliatelle with pesto, French onion tart, oeufs florentines — even, more simply, asparagus, raspberries, peaches, new potatoes. This has become even easier with the recent eruption of cookbooks devoted to delicious (as distinct from virtuous) vegetarian dishes. Sarah Brown's *Vegetarian Kitchen* (BBC) has already sold over 300,000 copies, while my own great favourite is Colin Spencer's *Gourmet Cooking for Vegetarians* (Robin Clark).

For those who require no more of their food than that it take half a second to cook, cheese, beans or eggs on toast (the cheese rennet-free, the eggs free-range and the toast made from wholemeal bread) are perfectly sound expedients; while take-away cravings can be satisfied by pizzas, houmous or falafels in pita, hundreds of Indian dishes. All that matters protein-wise is that, where feasible, one meal a day should include any two of the following: whole grains; nuts; pulses; dairy produce (or eggs). Fresh fruit and vegetables are also useful, but this is as true for omnivores as vegetarians.

So much for eating at home. Going out can pose more of a problem. There are, in Britain, something like 200 vegetarian restaurants — for details of which, or anything else to do with vegetarianism, write to the Vegetarian Society at 53 Marloes Road, London W8 6LA, enclosing an SAE — but, if you don't live in Cambridge, Oxford, Liverpool, Bristol, Brighton or London, you're unlikely to have one to hand, while most vegetarians have lovers, friends, colleagues or members of the family who want to eat meat when they're out.

My first device is to steer them to an Indian restaurant; failing that, a pizzeria; or a bistro/brasserie/wine bar, where at least they're bound to serve quiche. Down-market, in other words, things can usually be arranged. It's up-market where the going gets tough and where, on the rare occasion I'm there, I've been known to order a fish. The solution, I've discovered, is a multiple, self-loving order of the hors d'oeuvres (some of which are bound to be free from meat) and, if you bother to explain your motives, it could even tempt other restaurants to follow the wonderful Escargot in Greek Street, which always offers its punters a (good-ish) vegetarian main dish.

When invited to dinner with friends (to get back to the beginning) the obvious and most sensible device, but one which it took me months to work out, is to warn them about your dietary quirks at the moment you get the invitation. Not only does this save flummoxing your host at the table, it will also (90 per cent of the time) result in an imaginative meatless meal — and another dent in the economic viability of factory farming. You may not be *convinced* it needs denting — but, while rehearsing the arguments, doesn't it make sense to slant your eating habits in animals' favour? □

*From a 1984 Gallup Poll of 3,000 adults.

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Naseem Khan

Write on

THERE WAS nothing small or hole-in-the corner about Northern Writers' Week. It happened all over the place from rural Cumbria to industrial Tyneside; it threw up talks, readings, book launches, discussions and writers' 'surgeries' galore. About 100 different events took place in six days, some generated by Northern Arts Association and some the result of spontaneous local combustion. Since there was no way in which an observer could sample everything, I chose two days' events that reflected the activity-based bias of the week.

Can creative writing be taught? It's doubtful, thought Northern-based William Scammell launching his new volume of poetry at an outreach event at London's ICA. It's a doubt that runs counter to the whole burgeoning community writing movement that subsists on the firm faith that everyone is a potential creator and that the right sort of help and structure can unlock that potential.

In Gateshead Central Library (a solid Victorian pile), there were no doubts at all. Thirty-eight of the 50 who'd booked for Women Writers' Day had struggled there through the downpour and were rewarded with a day that was stimulating and well structured: a mixture of hard facts and soft talk. Although all the 20 or so women in my own group were writing, they also shared a quality of diffidence about themselves as writers that is far from uncommon among women, according to Cynthia Fuller who led one of the central discussions. Participants were otherwise very various — academics, teachers, the young out-of-work, older women ('I've never actually done anything with my life,' apologised a chunky, grey-haired woman who later turned out to have raised eight children in between working as a nurse.) Ms Fuller's session concentrated firstly on a mixture of encouragement and insight into the processes of writing and secondly on an instant practical exercise designed as the basis of possible discussion. The purpose was discreetly to stimulate. I have no doubt that it succeeded.

But how cut and dried was the principle? Cynthia Fuller wondered later. She vigorously refuted Scammell's reservations. At the same time, her activities as an editor for the magazine *Writing Women* tacitly acknowledged that there were such things as standards. Are they relative? Do they change according to circumstances? Or is the concept an anathema and self-expression an end in itself? These questions surfaced time and again that day and the next.

The debate that evening shifted things on to rather different ground. This was the week's prestige set-piece: Barry Hynes (*Threads, Kes,* etc.) sat on a low podium in the grandeur of Newcastle's Royal Station Hotel to discuss with Alan Plater (*Close the Coal House Door*, etc.) and the BBC's Brian Redhead the presence, or not, of the 'Great Divide'. It soon became obvious that neither of the main stars was at all interested in a north-south split. What was more relevant was the class and culture divide, the persistence of upper-class dominance, new links formed between striking miners down to lobby in London. How did this affect literature? asked Redhead, who functioned as a beaming devil's advocate, rapping left-wing knuckles with a humanist ruler. Style, the two essentially agreed: the need, given socialist convictions, to eschew dogma. You can't, said Plater, fob people off with it. 'You get caught out if you lie.' 'Get in quick with your political points,' advised Hynes, 'and withdraw quickly'. 'I would like,' he said, 'to write entertaining propaganda.' All this, of course, argues a conscious modification of subject matter and the development of technique — another area of contention over the week.

'What kind of writing and for whom?' asked one of the discussion workshops during the next day's Write Together, organised by the Association of Community Arts (North). A full day's programme brought together nine writers' groups and workshops from Tyneside, Teesside, Durham, Middlesbrough, Cleveland and Edinburgh to exchange news of activities, to start to talk about common issues and to lay the basis for future cooperation. 'We're here,' concluded Terry Telford from the chair. 'We've got something to say and we're going to say it!'

But how? Groups differed refreshingly in their approaches. Many seemed to favour poetry; some had branched out into performance; several had managed to publish anthologies. There were clear differences, for instance, between the Middlesbrough Writers' Group whose declared aims are to be commercially publishable and the non-judgmental attitude behind the publication of East Cleveland's *Village Verses*: 'We didn't want to set ourselves up as arty arbitrary judges of what was good or not.'

The issue of technique and standards would not go away. Telford himself clearly saw the need for some sort of rigour. ('I think it's essential to have some sort of dissenting voice in your workshop.') Others reacted fiercely against any hint of outside validation: 'We're like a lot of technicians,' snapped an elderly man after much talk of publishing outlets. 'If people ask me if I've had anything published, I say "Yeah, so what".'

The debate is in itself a sign of vigour, given that none of the groups at Durham (apart from Middlesbrough, an unusual 35 years old) was older than four years at most. There are no simple answers and none should be expected. At the very least, however, there's a variety and energy that augurs well for the future and there's printed work that is able to step beyond its immediate community. Look, for instance, at *Dotting the Is* and *Crossing the Ts*, collections of adult and junior work generated during Bob Pegg's period as Writer in Residence in Cleveland and see if you can ever again think — as Barry Hynes believes people down south do — of the north as just 'one great slag heap'. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Dreamtime

NOT ONLY through the fact of its existence, but through its daily contents, television teaches us that civilisation is unfolding backwards, not forwards as in the old lie of 'progress'. On Easter Day, a wonderful, sad documentary, **People of the Great Sand Face** (C4), showed the drought-afflicted Kalahari Bush people's losing battle to stay away from a civilisation which would put an end to their refined but fragile way of life.

Drought has reached Botswana as well as the countries further to the north and the last two years have caused the little Bush people to suffer slow extinction. Paul Myburgh's film is the historic record of the last year in the wild for one band of Gwi Bushmen. How he got them to accept his camera unselfconsciously into their most intimate everyday activities can be explained only by their own instinct that their days of freedom were numbered, yet might be preserved somehow by this stranger's apparatus. Perhaps his job was made easier by the Bushman's innate sense of equality. Some might object to the idea of fire being made by a hard 'male' stick being spun in soft 'female' wood, but male and female Bush people sit around the same fire at night, smoking, talking, dancing and joking together. Women play different musical instruments from men, a kind of elongated Jew's harp or a bundle of dry reeds to strum on, but they share responsibility in the search for the (mostly non-existent) food and water. Their society is a work of art in which music, medicine and the imagination are indistinguishable.

Myburgh chose not to figure in his film, but he spoke with feeling of the hunger and the rainless heat: 'The occasional small gift — one hyena and a tortoise for 24 hungry people and always the dryness . . .' The Bushmen hear that their relatives in a government settlement eat meat and drink water, so they set out on their last trek to Progress and the running tap, leaving home forever with their few belongings. Sadness . . . uncertainty, 'it seems strange that no one laughs when someone burns his fingers cooking an ostrich egg'. As they enter Quicom, no one talks: soccer posts, a donkey and always the throbbing of the bore-hole, spelling salvation and dissolution.

Perhaps Myburgh's greatest achievement — and the most confusing to watch — was the filming of a young girl's first bleeding ceremony. A grass shelter is built for her where she stays with her best friend until the bleeding stops. Then it is time for the all-woman celebration at which they bare their uniquely-jutting buttocks for dancing and singing in honour of the initiate. Her legs are wiped clean, an apron made for her and grass broken in front of her eyes so that she may see men more clearly. It seemed to me that the 13-year-old 'Cubba' looked at me through my TV screen with all the wisdom in the world.

I suppose it is not possible to apply the

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comforting Blakean vision implicit in **Time and the Conways** (BBC-1) — that each of us is the sum of all our days, both good and bad — to the fate of the Bush people, since it is their very existence that is in peril.

It was one of those haunting juxtapositions that television occasionally produces. From the delicate customs of the Great Sand Face and a people's annihilation from the earth to the last few good old days of a sprawling woman-heavy Edwardian family, already living off capital, appropriately playing charades at a daughter's coming-of-age party.

In mid-celebration the idealistic birthday girl Kay suddenly flashes forward to Act II (or is it forwards from there to Act III?) and the family's ruin. She asks her brother to tell her something which will help her come to terms with what she sees including her sister's death, but he cannot 'remember' what this is till 20 years later when he quotes Blake to her: 'Man was made for joy and woe; / And when this we rightly know, / Through the world we safely go'. It is a great moment and beautifully acted here by Phyllis Logan and Peter Chelsom.

Despite its plain writing, the play fascinates with its passionate characterisation, its faultless plotting and sense of prophecy. By the end, everyone in this house had the strong impression that the Conway family would soon be forced to make the long trek to the running tap of a government re-settlement programme down at the National Assistance Board. The laughter had stopped and you could almost hear the wailing of a donkey and over the horizon the ominous throbbing of a bore-hole called television. □

Weekend competition

No 2868 Set by George Cowley

Dean Inge once wrote, 'Religion is a way of walking, not a way of talking.' Could we have such succinct summings-up of any *specific* religion, political theory, philosophy? Max. five entries per comper by 24 April.

No 2865 Set by Maud Gracechurch

Excerpts from a 'ballad . . . to his mistress's eyebrow'.

Report By Len the Unlucky

So now we've been landed with a power cut: no lights and no heat (except for those from the guttering candles that She has produced from Her no doubt necromantically-earmarked supplies) and the others — I hardly need spell it out — have decided to go home early, leaving yours truly to probe through the eyebrows piled on top of his desk. And he doesn't, I might add, see a great many *ballads* among them. Odes, yes; a 12-line sonnet; even something like a clerihew; but the only really ballad-like poem is by T.D. Armstrong who sadly loses his valiant struggle for a rhythm. Still, if my eyesight and frozen brains don't deceive me, each poem below deserves a tenner.

Miss Wilkinson's eyebrow goes up when she's cross
Like the fur on a furious cat.
She's the sort who insists on us knowing who's boss;
'Class be silent!' she says — and that's that.

Her eyebrow is awful. The torments of hell
Are threatened by each scathing rise.
Her nose seems to sense some unspeakable smell
And there's weary contempt in her eyes.

Miss Wilkinson's eyebrow is utterly vile;
Its expressiveness makes me feel numb.
I am terrified, too, by her shark-worthy smile —
But she's got a delectable bum.

ALISON PRINCE

Aye, just the ane, a Healey line
Scratched blackit 'cross her brow,
Like sea-wrack stranded by the tide
Or crows' nests on a bough.

And linkit hairs across the brow
Betoken vice they say,
Ripe lust and lechery besides.
Aye, that 'ud be the day!

She'm chaster than a chlorined cloth,
Three barley wines won't buy 'er.
Her virtue's cold as ice-bound loch,
That lusty brow's a liar!

D.A. PRINCE

Last night as she lay on my pillow,
Last night as she lay on my bed,
Oh! why could she not just lie still, oh?
Did she have to keep moving her head?

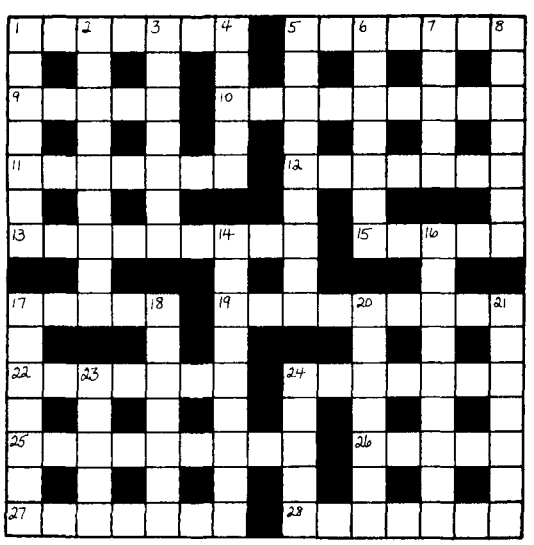
Did she have to keep crying out 'Try Max!'
As the sweat kept besprinkling my brow?
Then, just as I thought we'd reached climax,
Scream that she'd dropped her left eyebrow?

I thought, 'She's a right Nut and Fruitcase,'
Then she took out a spare from her suitcase . . . .

ALAN CLARK

Weekend Crossword 1475

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1475, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 23 April.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

ACROSS

1. Get something to eat from a dip in the road (7)
5. If I am so upset by society people (7)
9. Girl with golden bottom? (5)
10. Select a player for a game (9)
11. Physical disability of a writer about to take his place (7)
12. One of those people for whom a king returns in the embrace of a goddess (7)
13. Sample of a setter being wrong (9)
15. If it loses a point such speech is dross (5)
17. Show fear when caught a debtor (5)
19. Boring addressee of Scott (9)
22. Almost excavate the lot with the fingers (7)
24. Deprived of something to read the poor would be aristocratic (7)
25. Poke fun a little bit and give the bird (9)
26. Nut needed for spare cap (5)
27. Goes up and down like bishops' tools? (7)
28. One who does this may be all in even when victorious (7)

DOWN

1. Departure from an unfinished existence by an aristocrat (7)
2. Nils? No, but the result is the same (9)
3. Welshman who is always tearing about (7)
4. No longer having a drink, my pet? (5)
5. Contrivances used by a woman without a backbone (9)
6. Vehicles needed if races are exciting (7)
7. Hold forth when there is nothing to value (5)
8. A hint given by pink lingerie (7)
14. Touch is the place for one kept in idleness when injured (9)
16. Entertainment is mainly to employ people after the morning is over (9)
17. Books fish and sweet (7)
18. Something to eat which is cooked at a fair (7)
20. A wise man takes in country food (7)
21. Such a one leaves all but the beginning (7)
23. It is serious if Marshal is dropped by former test cricketer (5)
24. Exclamation a playwright would make if a page were missing (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1473

B	R	A	I	N	W	A	S	H		B	U	C	K	S
A		L		O		R		U		A		A		A
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N	I	G	E	R		N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R
		R		I				N				U		A
B	O	O	M	E	R	A	N	G		P	O	S	I	T
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E		C		T		T		B		A		A		E
N	I	E	C	E		S	H	A	L	L	O	W	E	R

Prizewinners to 1473

Clive Brightley (Reading, Berks.)
Iain Haxton (Dunkeld, Perthshire)
Freddy Kavanagh (Co. Wexford, Eire)

The solution and prizewinners to Crossword 1474 will appear next week.

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INTELLIGENT, SUCCESSFUL, attractive(?) professional woman, previously long-time wife and mother, ex-public school, divorced, early 50s, impeccable credentials. Seeks top line male counterpart, socially polished for civilised relationship, perhaps pooling of resources. Resident Heart of England. CV please. Box (15)0609.

LIVELY, ORIGINAL and good natured woman, in thirties, intelligent, not always wise, seeks friendly male companion, with urban interests, theatre, cinema, music, gossip. Pennines area. Box (14)0576.

MIDLAND-BASED woman, 50-ish, middle-brow, independent. Interests: birding to conversing, seeks like-minded/aged man (uncomplicated), for sharing. Box (15)0624.

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SLIGHTLY DEMORALISED revolutionary socialist male, 28, small, slim, attractive, interests: cinema, reading, music, games, seeks female lover for affectionate, sensual, possibly long-term relationship. London. Box (14)0585.

SUCCESSFUL, PROFESSIONAL man, 44, semi-detached, fancy free, seeks attractive, fun loving, intelligent lady, for caring, no strings relationship. London/Surrey. Box (15)0623.

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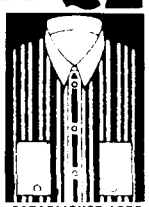

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 14 April 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'The Path to the Masters'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, W2.

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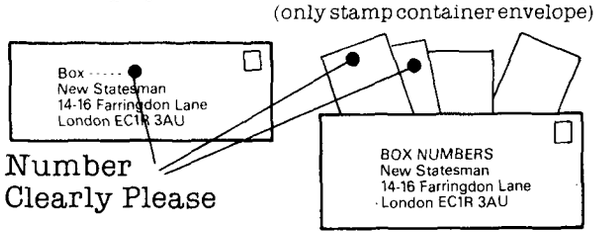

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LISTINGS

FRI 12 APR

LONDON 12-21 April Latin American Festival '85. Groups, solo artists, spkrs & films. **Info 01-272 4298 or send SAE for leaflet about all events to Libertad, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7 7QG.** Selected individual events asterisked below.

***LONDON** Concert for Central America 7pm, Central Hall, Westminster. Featuring: Luis Mejia Godoy (Nicaragua), Amparo Ochoa (Mexico), Grupo Experimental (Costa Rica). **Tickets: £6.50, £5.50, £4 from 29 Islington Park St, N1. Details: Duncan Green 01-359 6235/359 3976, Amanda Goodall 01-359 8982.**

BIRMINGHAM 'Consensus or Confrontation: New styles in Local Government'. Re-union and study wkend org. by Fircroft Guild at Fircroft College, Selly Oak, Birmingham 19. **Details: Stan Todd, Bryn Aderyn, Penygarn, Pontypool, Gwent.**

SAT 13 APR

LONDON Labour Cttee. on Ireland Social. Live Irish music, poetry. 8pm Calthorpe Arms, Calthorpe St. EC1 (5 mins, Kings X). Adm. £1.50/50p UB40.

COUNTRYWIDE Protest against McDonald's and other burger places. Contact London Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1.

LONDON** Faith under fire — discn & celebration on Christians and society in Latin America & Britain. Participants from 5 Latin American countries & USA. 10.30am-9.30pm, Bloomsbury Baptist Church, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2. **Details: Christian Aid London Region 01-730 9068.

LONDON Campaign against Racist Laws National Conference. 11am-4.30pm, Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1. Spkrs incl Gail Lewis, Muhammad Idrish, Fiona Mactaggart & NUM rep. £2/£1 unwaged. Creche & disabled access. **Org Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants 01-251 8706.**

SUN 14 APR

LONDON Labour Cttee. on Ireland AGM 10am County Hall, SE1. Spkrs, incl. Clare Short MP, Christine Crawley MEP on 'The Strategy for British withdrawal'. John McDonnell (Dep. Leader GLC), Dr Maire O'Shea on 'Irish in Britain'. Disabled access, creche. Open to all Labour Party supporters.

***LONDON** A Festival in Solidarity with Latin American Women. 10am-10pm, Students Union, Univ of London Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1. Women only. **Tickets £2.50/75p unwaged. from CSC, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7 7QG 01-272 4298** (also for access details).*

TUES 16 APR

LONDON** (also 17 & 18 Apr) Art for Life's Sake. Three eves with Guatemalan theatre group Teatro Vivo plus (Tues & Wed) Los Awatinas (music from Bolivia). Tues 7.30pm, Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 7.15pm, Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, W8. **Tickets £5/£2.50 unwaged from GCHR, 20 Compton Tce, N1 2UN 01-359 1836 or Bolivian Working Grp, 42 Hornsey Road, N7 01-607 5550.

THURS 18 APR

LONDON 'Is the nuclear family outdated?' Spkr Jocelyn Chaplin, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm (incl refreshments 7pm) 75p/unwaged free. **Org Progressive League Woman/Man Relationship Grp.**

LONDON Solidarity Freedom & Justice. Mtg. to organise support for SWAPO, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, NW1. Spkrs from SWAPO, ANC, also Joan Ruddock, Cllr Diane Abbott, Malcolm Pitt (Kent NUM). **Org SWAPO/Namibia Support Committee/Anti-Apartheid Movement.**

LONDON** After Columbus — Indian struggles in Latin America today. 2pm two Bolivian films + new film by Alberto Duran; 6pm slide shows with talks. Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, W8. Adm free. **Further info: SI 01-839 3267.

LONDON** Colombian evening. 6-8.30pm spkrs; 8.30-11.30pm Salsa party. Brixton Town Hall, Acre Lane, SW2. Adm £1.50. Food & drink. **Details: 01-359 2270.

FRI 19 APR

LONDON** Concert for Chile with Capri, Earl Okin, Meliantu. 7.30pm, Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. **Tickets £4/£2.50 unwaged from CSC, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7 01-272 4298/928 2099.

LONDON Free showing of John Pilger's documentary film on nuclear propaganda *'The Truth Game'*. 8pm, Naborhood Centre, Sydenham Rd, SE26. Disabled access. **Org Sydenham & Forest Hill CND 01-699 6712.**

LONDON 'Poverty — a crisis for babies' Maternity Alliance Conf. Royal College of Obstetricians, 27 Sussex Pl, NW1. **Apply to Sue Hunt, Maternity Alliance, 59-61 Camden High St, NW1 7JL.**

FORTHCOMING

21 APR LEEDS 'Jewish Perspectives on Nuclear Arms' Nat. JONAH (Jews Organised for a Nuclear Arms Halt) Seminar 9.30am-5pm. Adult Education Centre, Springfield Mount, Leeds 2. (Part of Univ. campus). Workshops, vegetarian lunch, creche. Adm. £8/£4 UB40. **Details: JONAH, 14 North Park Grove, Leeds 8.**

24 APR LONDON Rally & lobby against Enoch Powell's Bill on *in vitro* fertilisation and embryo research, House of Commons. Spkrs incl Jo Richardson, David Owen, Peter Furnham, & from National Abortion Campaign, Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign, Abortion Law Reform Assn, National Assn for the Childless, Women's TUC. **Also demo Sat 27 Apr**, starting Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1pm. **Details: ALRA 01-359 5200, NAC 01-405 4801, WRRC 01-251 6332.**

26 APRIL MOLESWORTH Peace Camp. Cycle rides from all over Britain will converge on USAF Molesworth. SE Ride starts in London on 22nd Apr with full back-up. (Money raised is for OXFAM & Campaign Against Arms Trade.) **Details: Ride for Life, c/o Brixton Cycles, 433 Coldharbour La, SW9 01-671 1965/733 6055.**

27 APRIL LONDON Preparation Meeting for UN Conf. on Women Nairobi 1985. 1-6pm Tolmers Sq Community Centre, Foundry Mews, NW1. Women only. Disabled access/creche/refreshments. **Details: King's X Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St, WC1. 01-837 7509.**

27 APR JORDANS (Bucks) 'Christian Peacemaking in a divided Europe' 10am-5pm Village Hall. Spkrs. incl. Jan Ter Laak (Pax Christi, Netherlands) on Poland; Peter Jarman (Quakers) on USSR; Stephen Tunnicliffe (Anglican) on Hungary. Registration Fee £4/£1.50 UB40 to **Stephen Tunnicliffe for END, 4 The Square, Clun, Shropshire SY7 8JA. 058-84398.**

4 MAY BIRMINGHAM 'Reaching the public' day school. 9.30am-5.30pm, St Francis Hall, B'ham Univ. Adm £2 CND Peace Group reps/£1 unwaged individuals. **Org West Midlands Region CND 021-643 4617/632 6909.**

9 MAY ROTHERHAM Public meeting on Civil Liberties. Spkrs Kevin Barron MP, Mehmet Ali Dikerdem, Anne Rittingale. 7.30pm, Rotherham Library & Arts Centre. **Org. Rotherham CND. Details: Sue Chant, Rotherham 554087.**

9 MAY LONDON MI5's official secrets — showings of 20/20 Vision video documentary & discn led by Cathie Lloyd of Cities of London & Westminster Public Order Research Grp. 8pm, Paddington Labour Club, 39 Chippenham Rd, W9. **Org Miners' Support Grp for Westminster & the City/CLW PORG.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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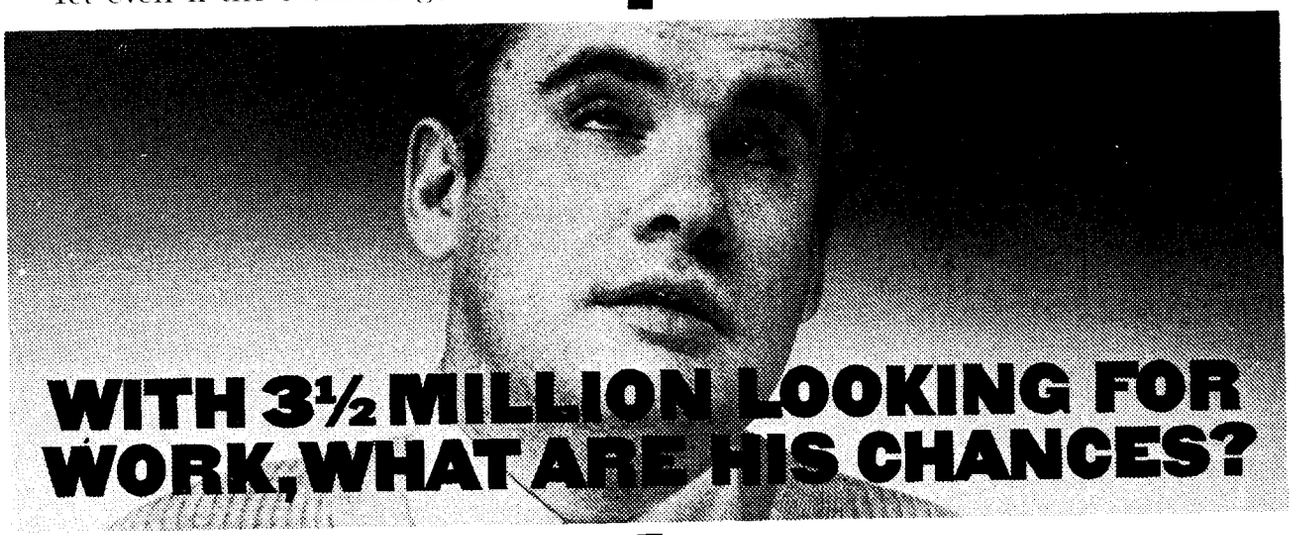

WITH 3½ MILLION LOOKING FOR WORK, WHAT ARE HIS CHANCES?

They'd be a lot higher if he didn't mention his disability.

Because he'll be lucky to get an interview once that's on his application form.

One man that we know of had 50 job applications rejected in a row.

Until he didn't mention his disability.

He then received 12 interviews out of the next 35 applications.

Yet even if the disabled get an interview, a lot of the time is taken asking how they'd cope.

They'll be asked in great detail how they'd get to work if they had a puncture. Or how they'd be able to reach a particular filing system. (No thought is given to locating the filing system in a different place.)

But with 3½ million able-bodied to choose from, why should you as an employer consider someone with a disability?

Firstly, many disabilities don't affect a person's ability to do the job.

An artificial leg is no barrier to being a draughtsman. Nor is deafness a handicap to programming a computer.

What's more, it's been found that people with disabilities actually take less time off through illness.

Simply because they're glad to be given a job.

And their disability often means that they're able to use their other senses more efficiently.

For example, the blind can have a more developed sense of touch or hearing. So for some jobs they might actually be better equipped.

Admittedly, it might cost you a small investment to accommodate them, but Government funding is available through the Manpower Services Commission.

And you could be breaking the law if you don't employ them.

Because if you have over 20 people in your company then 3% of your workforce should be disabled.

Not that the law alone is powerful enough to overcome prejudice.

Which is why the GLC has set up the Disability Resource Team.

To encourage employers to operate an equal opportunities policy.

To give advice to the disabled themselves. As well as to other members of the community in positions of power.

Because even if disabled people are able to get a job, their problems are far from over.

The simplest of journeys is a major expedition. They're labelled fire risks in theatres and cinemas. Seen as obstacles in pubs and restaurants. Or restricted to off-peak hours in swimming pools.

Virtually imprisoning them in their own homes.

If you're an employer do give some consideration to employing the disabled. Or if you'd like advice write for our leaflet to GLC Disability Resource Team, Room 92, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Or telephone the GLC Hotline on 01-633 4400.

We'd also welcome enquiries from people with disabilities. We're not able to solve individual cases but we can give guidance.

If you do consider a disabled person for a job you'll sleep well at nights.

Not because you've been charitable.

But because you've made a wise business decision.

GLC. A DISABILITY SHOULDN'T BE A HANDICAP.

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